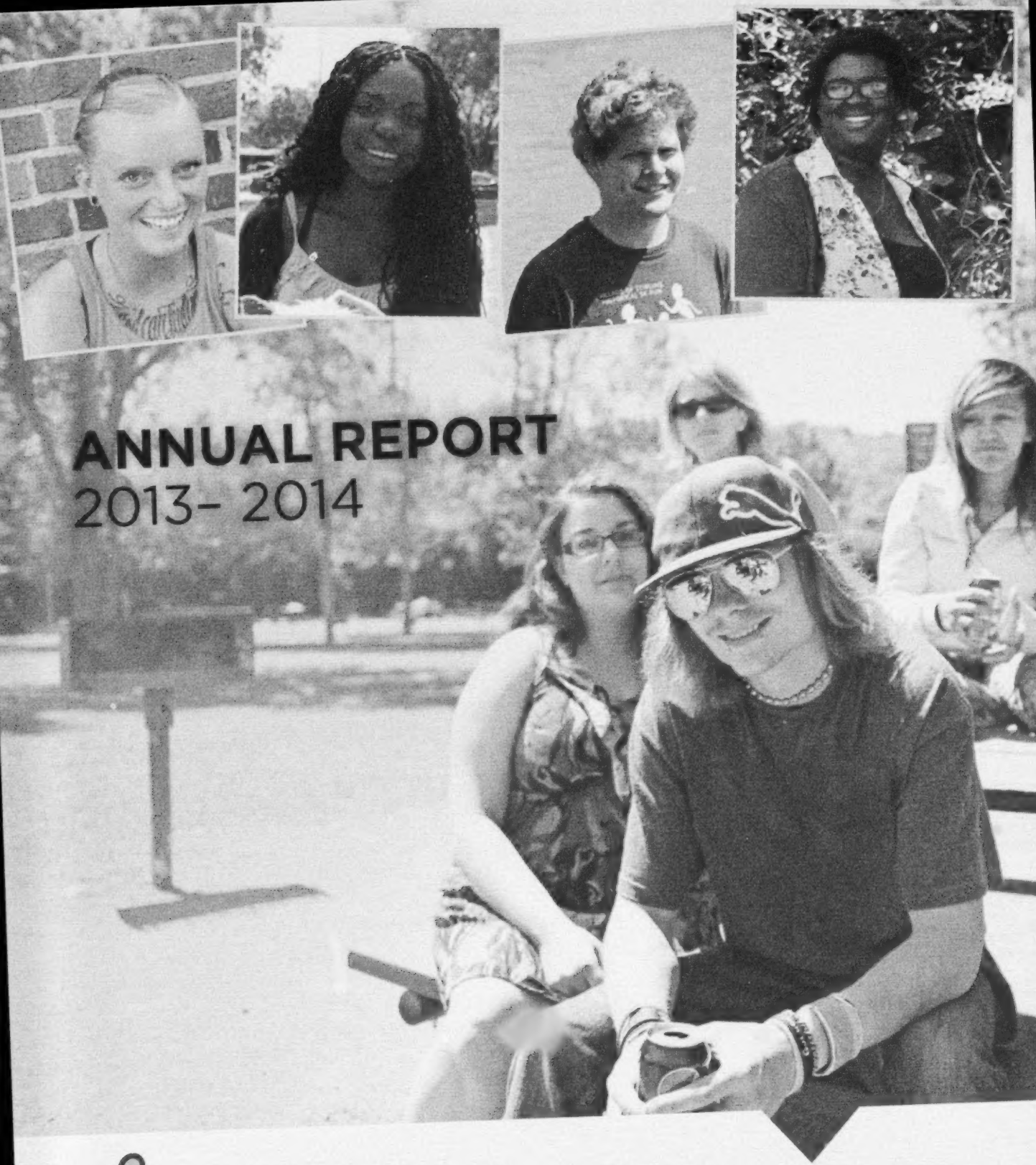
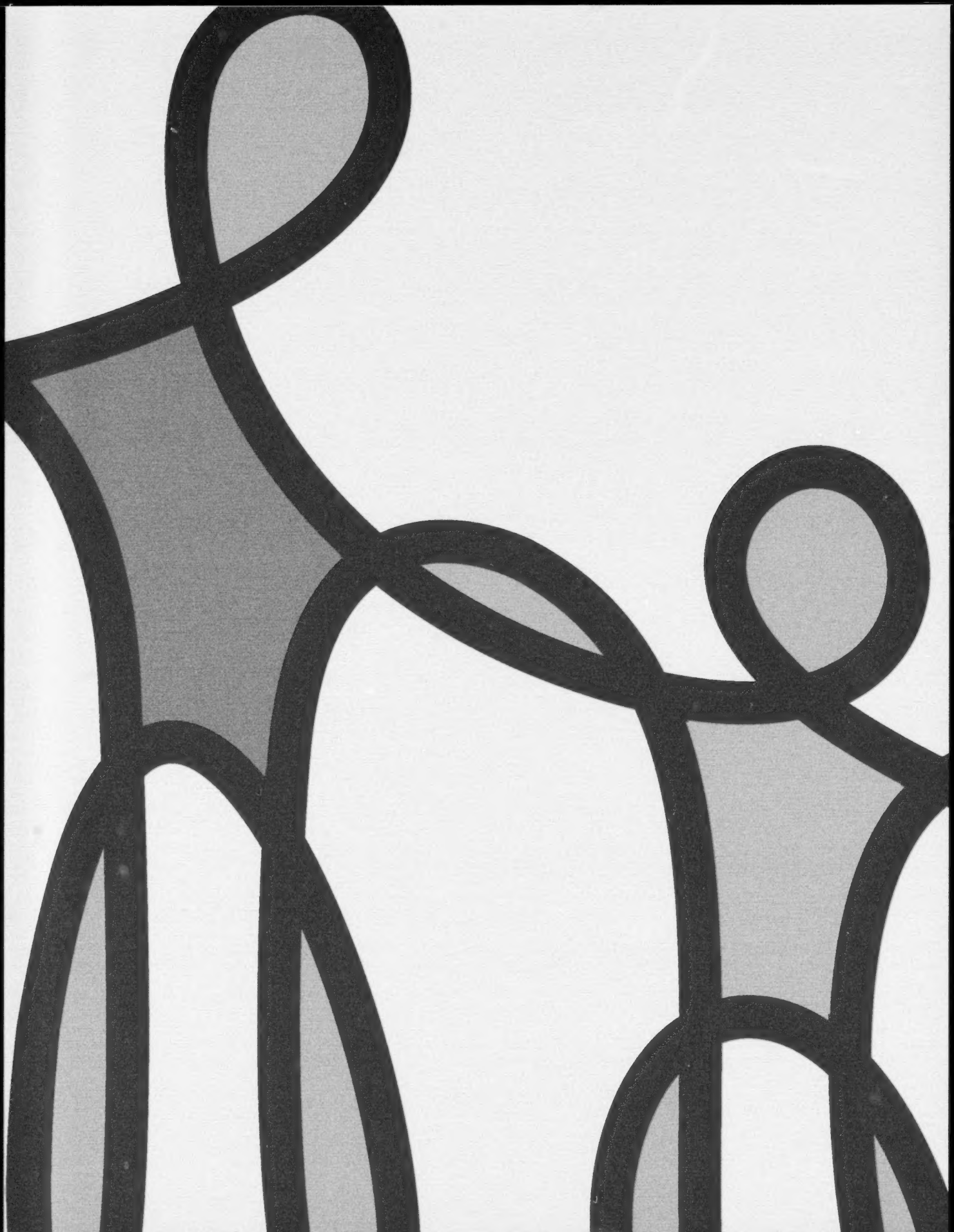


ANNUAL REPORT
2013- 2014

ocya

OFFICE OF THE CHILD
AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
ALBERTA



ocya OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE ALBERTA

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
325 Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Speaker:

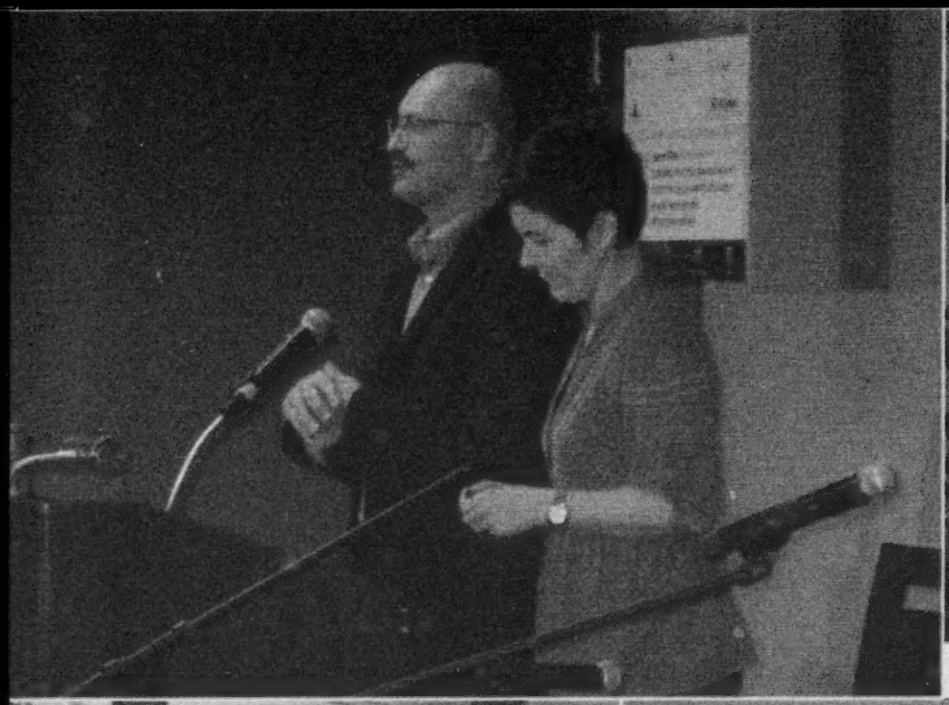
It is my privilege to submit to you the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

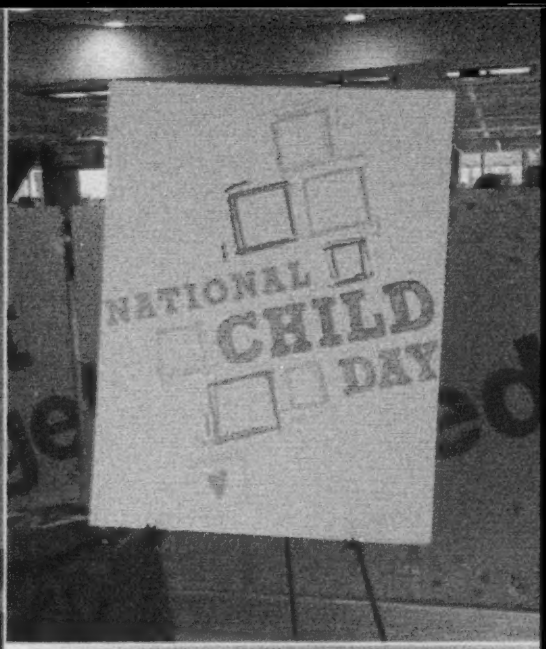
The Report has been prepared in accordance with Section 21(1) of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* and covers the activities of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate for the period April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

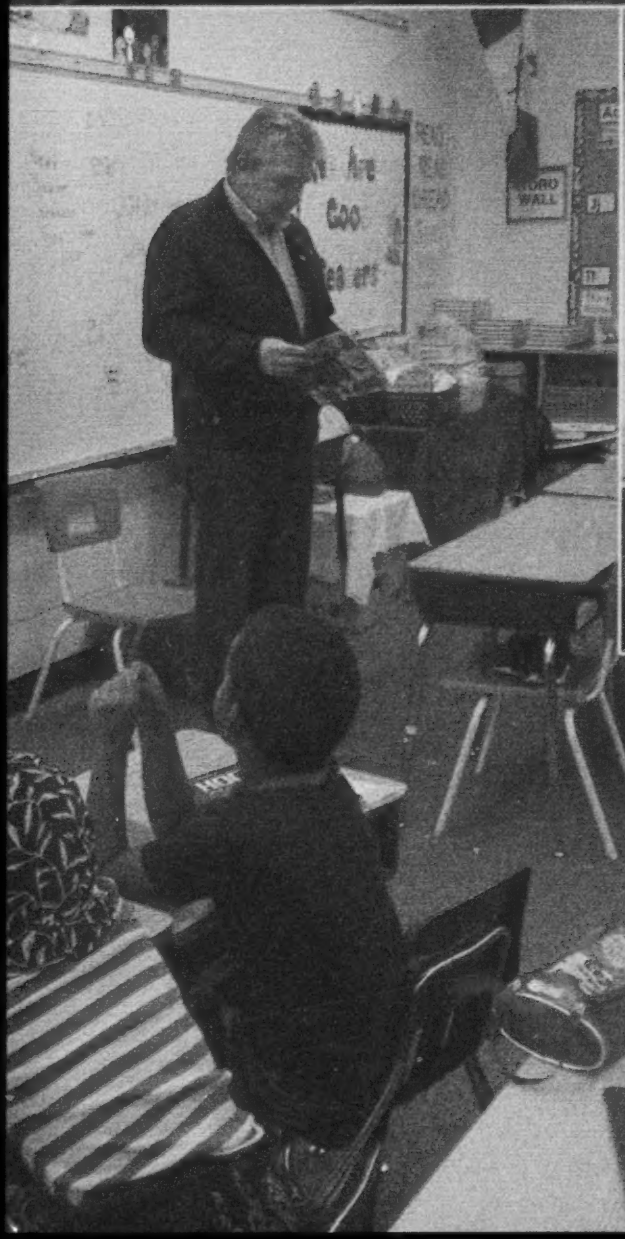
Respectfully,

[Original signed by Del Graff]

Del Graff
Child and Youth Advocate




NATIONAL
CHILD
DAY



Office of the Child
nd Youth Advocate

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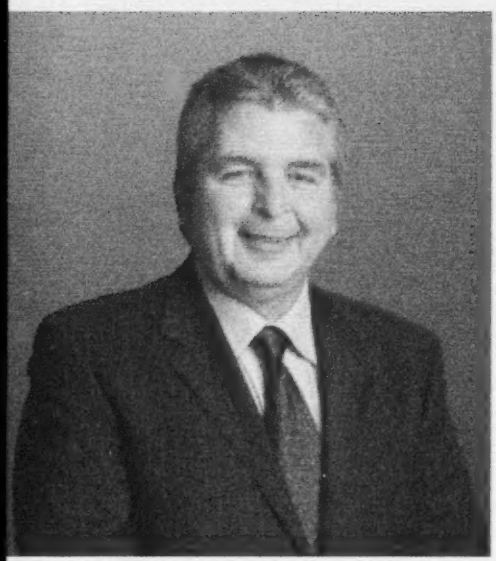
MESSAGE FROM THE ADVOCATE



So much of what we do in the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is about increasing the ability of young people to have their rights upheld, their interests considered and their voices heard.

There are many days where our advocacy efforts feel like the most natural and worthwhile way to work with young people. We can see the positive impact of young people feeling heard, and they can see their interests are important to decision makers. There is recognition that young people are rights holders. That is when advocacy is working, and is what we strive to do.

We continue to forge our path forward in becoming more effective advocates for vulnerable children in Alberta. We have worked hard to be clear about who we are, about what we do, and about who we serve. We have tried to find balance in our efforts to address issues constructively, whether those issues were related to one child, or to a population of vulnerable children. We reach out to a range of stakeholders, including service providers, First Nations Communities, Métis people, and others.

All of our efforts can be characterized as contributions to a single purpose; to ensure the rights, interests and viewpoints of Alberta's vulnerable children and youth are affirmed and acted upon.

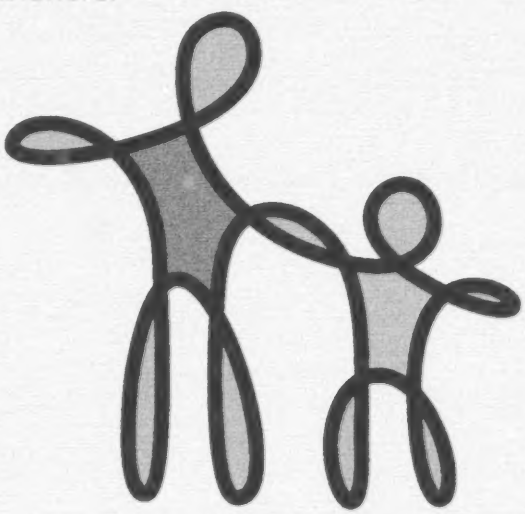
Over the past year, we have improved our policies and processes, become more transparent in our work, and have broadened our capacity to reach out to young people. We are moving forward as an independent office of the Legislature of Alberta.

Whether attending to issues related to Child Death Reviews, participating in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final National Event, or celebrating National Child Day, our energy is directed in ways that we believe contribute to greater positive outcomes for children and youth.

There continues to be work to do. While I have seen significant progress in many areas that my office has advocated for young people, there are some areas where progress has been slow. Examples include a lack of meaningful progress by Government on recommendations made in our Investigative Review Reports. As well, the lack of attention to specific issues like a direct response to neglect, and to the over representation of Aboriginal children and youth in Government care remain serious concerns. In my view, there needs to be a more serious and sustained effort to address these issues.

Every day, we hear from young people who contact us looking fc advocacy. While they may have struggles, they are also generous and kind, courageous and strong. They help us learn to advocate with conviction and passion on their behalf. They guide us in our work, teach us how to be more effective advocates, and inspire us to reach higher in our efforts to advocate for them. I thank them for it.

"There are many days where our advocacy efforts feel like the most natural and worthwhile way to work with young people. We can see the positive impact of young people feeling heard, and they can see their interests are important to decision makers."



OUR VISION

THE **RIGHTS, INTERESTS AND VIEWPOINTS** OF ALBERTA'S VULNERABLE **CHILDREN AND YOUTH** ARE **AFFIRMED** AND **ACTED UPON.**

OUR MISSION

WE REPRESENT **THE RIGHTS, INTERESTS AND VIEWPOINTS** OF ALBERTA **CHILDREN AND YOUTH** WHO RECEIVE DESIGNATED INTERVENTION SERVICES OR WHO ARE INVOLVED WITH THE YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

SERVING THE INTERESTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In April 2012, a new era of child and youth advocacy began in Alberta with the proclamation of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. With this, Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate ("the Advocate") commenced reporting as an independent officer of the Alberta Legislature.

Now two years into its independent role, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) works to advance the rights and serve the interests of young people who are receiving designated services.[1] This includes young people who are receiving or attempting to access services under Alberta's *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (the "*Enhancement Act*") or *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* (*PSECA*), or involved with the youth justice system.

The OCYA does this in several ways including:

- providing legal representation for child and youth intervention court matters;
- facilitating public education and awareness-building about the rights of young people and the OCYA in supporting the exercise of those rights;
- providing individual advocacy to young people involved with designated services;
- developing relationships with stakeholders, including the systems and organizations that provide services to and support young people;
- identifying systemic issues that impact children and youth who are receiving services from government ministries and public systems; and
- conducting investigations in the event of the serious injury or death of a young person receiving designated services.

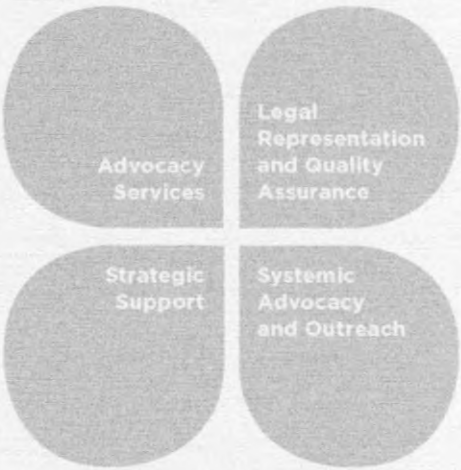
[1] "Designated services" are defined under the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.

As an independent office, the OCYA provides an important "check and balance" on behalf of young people when government intervention has been necessary to ensure their safety, security and development. In these cases, the Government of Alberta can be making significant decisions on their behalf, and it is of utmost importance that their voices and interests are heard and considered.

A hallmark of the OCYA's vision and mission is ensuring that young people understand their rights and have every reasonable opportunity to participate in decision-making that affects them.

THE ORGANIZATION

The work of the OCYA is centred on four divisions:



All of these divisions report to the Child and Youth Advocate, who is an Officer of the Alberta Legislature.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Each year the OCYA is required to submit an Annual Report to the Speaker of the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

The *2013-2014 Annual Report* highlights the major activities undertaken by the OCYA during the reporting period of April 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014. It also outlines priorities for the year ahead and discusses systemic issues identified by the Advocate during the past year.

ADVOCACY SERVICES

ADVANCING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Advocacy Services works to represent the rights, interests and viewpoints of young people who are receiving services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (the "*Enhancement Act*"), the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* (*PSECA*) and youth having involvement with the youth justice system. The circumstances of these young people often require that they be given support to ensure their access to entitlements, benefits and services.

Advocacy Services are based on the fundamental belief that each young person has rights and needs. We support and intervene when their rights and interests need to be affirmed and acted upon. These supportive interventions are delivered by a team of advocates. As employees of the OCYA, advocates are independent of the government systems with which young people are interacting.

Rights are a critical foundation of our society. A person's rights enable that person to secure protection of their interests, and to seek compensation through the legal system when those interests are infringed upon. Accordingly, the rights held by individuals, or groups of individuals, need to be recognized and protected. This is particularly the case for young people, who often are not fully aware of their rights and do not know how to exercise them.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) **is an international treaty developed in 1989 that recognizes the rights of children. The CRC provides a framework to follow when developing legislation or programs affecting children. Canada signed the CRC in 1990 and ratified it in 1991, thereby obligating Canada to promote, implement, protect and monitor the rights of children. In 1999, the Province of Alberta endorsed the CRC.**

Recognizing this, advocates use their knowledge and understanding of the rights of children and youth to represent young people who are receiving services from or interacting with designated government systems. When providing advocacy services to a young person, each advocate:

- promotes and secures the rights and interests of children and youth;
- is led by the views of young people;
- is accessible, responsive and timely;
- is respectful;
- is consistent and accountable; and
- ensures confidentiality for young people.

An advocate also helps a young person identify and express their interests and viewpoints. A young person's interests are those matters that are of importance to them: such as their desires, hopes, fears and concerns which need to be considered when decisions are being made for them.

A young person's viewpoint is their way of looking at a situation. An advocate considers a young person's situation and the decision being made about that situation from the perspective of the young person. By representing their viewpoint, an advocate emphasizes a young person's right to participate actively in decisions being made for them.

When working with a young person, an advocate encourages the young person to define their specific issues and, to the extent they are able, to:

- describe what is not working for them;
- describe what the situation would be if it were working better; and
- choose the advocacy strategies and participate in the implementation of these strategies.

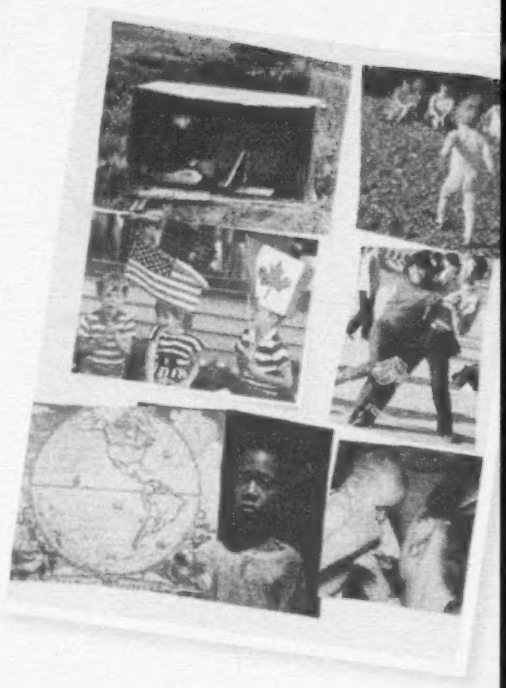
In their work, advocates assume that young people can direct their advocacy efforts unless there are factors present that preclude this. For example, a young person may be unable to express their wishes, wants or needs regarding an issue because of some limiting condition, which may include:

- being pre-verbal;
- having a significant mental impairment; or
- because of the complexity of the issue being addressed, and the young person's developmental abilities, the young person cannot reasonably be expected to direct the advocacy efforts.

In these types of situations an advocate may not be taking direction from the young person; however, the advocate will still advocate on behalf of the young person. When an advocate is not taking direction from a young person, the advocate will:

- focus primarily on learning about the young person and their circumstances;
- introduce any new information for the decision-maker to consider; and
- ensure that the young person's rights, interests and viewpoints are considered in decisions made about the young person.

Information that a young person provides to an advocate in confidence is considered privileged and cannot be released without the consent of the young person. The only exceptions are when there is a disclosure about a child possibly in need of intervention, which must be reported under the *Enhancement Act*; and when an advocate receives information that a person may come to grievous harm, which must also be reported. The records created by the OCYA are exempt from disclosure as per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.



KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2013-2014

RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2013-2014, Advocacy Services served 2,753 young people. This represents a year-over-year decrease of 19 per cent in the total number of young people served. The largest decrease was among children aged 5 and younger. Young people between 12 and 17 years of age continue to be those served most frequently by Advocacy Services, comprising 42 per cent of all young people served.

Levels of need for advocacy remain quite strong, particularly among Aboriginal children and youth. The proportion of Aboriginal young people receiving advocacy services continues to increase year over year. In 2013-2014, Aboriginal young people comprised 60 per cent of all young people served, up from 56 per cent in 2012-2013. This is reflective of the population in the Child Intervention system. In March 2014, 59 per cent of young people served in Child Intervention (either in or out of care) or who were receiving supports under Support and Financial Assistance Agreements[2] were identified as Aboriginal.

Third party referrals remain the most common mechanism by which young people are referred to Advocacy Services. Almost half (48 per cent) of all young people served in 2013-2014 were referred in this way. However, an increasing number of clients made self-referrals compared to 2012-2013, representing nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) of all young people served.

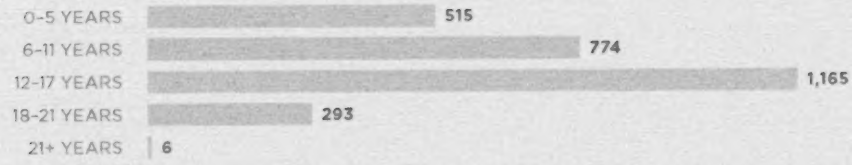
ENHANCING OUR OPERATIONS

In June 2013, the Advocacy Services policy manual was revised to reflect legislative, organizational and practice changes. For the first time the manual was posted on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca). This provides further transparency to Albertans about the operations of the OCYA and how it undertakes advocacy work.

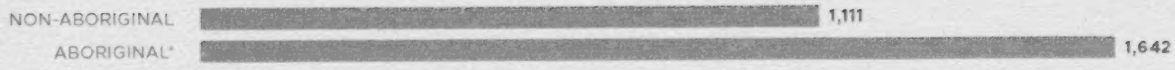
2 Support and Financial Assistance Agreement refers to an agreement that the Ministry of Human Services enters into with a young person aged 18 to 22 years to provide support and financial assistance to the young person.

2013-2014

AGES OF YOUNG PEOPLE SERVED



RACIAL ORIGIN OF YOUNG PEOPLE SERVED



**Aboriginal includes young people identified as First Nations, Inuit, Métis, "Non-Status", "potential to be registered", and "unknown Aboriginal group."*

REFERRAL SOURCES OF YOUNG PEOPLES SERVED

**Own Motion referrals are those initiated by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.*

IMPROVING RESPONSES TO MANDATORY NOTIFICATIONS

For young people receiving designated services under the *Enhancement Act* or *PSECA*, there are critical points in their lives during which there may be barriers to their rights, interests and viewpoints being fully considered when decisions are made on their behalf. The Ministry of Human Services provides mandatory notification to the OCYA in the following circumstances:

- a young person disagrees with a significant decision that pertains to them;
- the needs of a child are not being met;
- significant persons in the child's life have competing perspectives that are not focused on the child; or
- an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in care is made.

During the past year, the OCYA made changes in how it responds to mandatory notifications regarding allegations of abuse of young people in care. In the past, these responses were often limited. Historically, the OCYA focus was limited to ensuring the allegations were taken seriously, that an assessment or investigation took place, and that the outcome was reasonable.

Practice changes have been made to ensure that a young person is always given an opportunity to direct advocacy, identify advocacy issues and decide if they wish to work with an advocate. In cases where

the young person cannot direct advocacy efforts, the advocate will consider other related interests of the young person (e.g., permanency, connection to family, cultural connections). Advocacy is no longer limited to matters related to the allegations.

FOCUSING ON TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In addition to pursuing their individual professional development opportunities, advocates from the north and south OCYA offices meet at least twice a year for a full day of professional development. These collective sessions provide an opportunity for advocates to work together to improve individual advocacy practice. Experts are often retained to facilitate training and development sessions. During the past year, advocates met collectively on three occasions (in June 2013, October 2013 and February 2014). These sessions covered topics that included improving documentation quality, an analysis of current research and practice discussions on challenging issues facing children and youth.

GATHERING FEEDBACK FROM YOUTH TO INFORM OUR WORK

To help facilitate continuous improvement of Advocacy Services, the OCYA solicits feedback from young people who have received these services. During 2013-2014, changes were made to improve the feedback process. Previously, young people received a survey by mail and were asked to complete and return the survey to the OCYA. The new process features an independent contractor who contacts young people to arrange for a telephone interview. Attempts are made to contact young people who are 12 years of age and older, unless the young person's situation would limit their ability to participate in the interview. (e.g., the young person is unable to verbally communicate or their whereabouts are unknown).

For the 2013-2014 year, 337 young people were eligible to participate in the survey, and contact was made with 94 young people (27.9 per cent contact rate). Of the 94 young people, 85 agreed to participate in the survey and remembered their advocate (a 25.2 per cent response rate of those eligible to participate). The improved response rate in 2013-2014 compared to 2011-2012[3] (when the response rate was 8.5 per cent), shows that the new methods that we have been using are a more successful approach at gathering feedback from young people.

Information gathered through the survey is used to monitor the quality of Advocacy Services from young people's perspectives on a number of measures. Two of these measures are OCYA performance measures. The OCYA exceeded the 2013-2014 targets on both of these measures.

3 2012-2013 was a transitional year when we were developing our new survey processes.

The vast majority of young people surveyed (95.3 per cent) indicated that their advocate had made a positive difference for them (81 young people responded "yes," one responded "no" and three were "unsure.") The 2013-2014 target for this measure was 80 per cent.

Similarly, young people overwhelmingly responded that their advocate listened to them and represented their viewpoints (97 per cent), far exceeding the 2013-2014 target of 80 per cent. This measure had two separate indicators on the Youth Feedback Survey that were averaged using equal weighting to obtain the result. In all, 97.6 per cent of respondents indicated that their advocate listened to them (83 young people responded "yes" and two were "unsure"/"didn't remember") and 96.4 per cent agreed that their advocate helped them to get across what was important to them to adults who make decisions about them (80 young people responded "yes," one responded "no" and two were "unsure"/"didn't remember.")

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	LAST ACTUAL 2012-2013	TARGET 2013-2014	ACTUAL 2013-2014
Percentage of youth who indicate their Advocate listened to them and represented their viewpoints.	Measure under development	**80%**	**97%**
Percentage of youth who were satisfied that their Advocate made a positive difference for them.	Measure under development	**80%**	**95.3%**

What young people have to say about their experience with their advocate

"It was a good experience. It was good to know there was someone there for me."

"She is a fabulous person, trustworthy, good at solving problems. If another problem comes up – she would be the person I would call."

"Everything went amazing – he really did help."

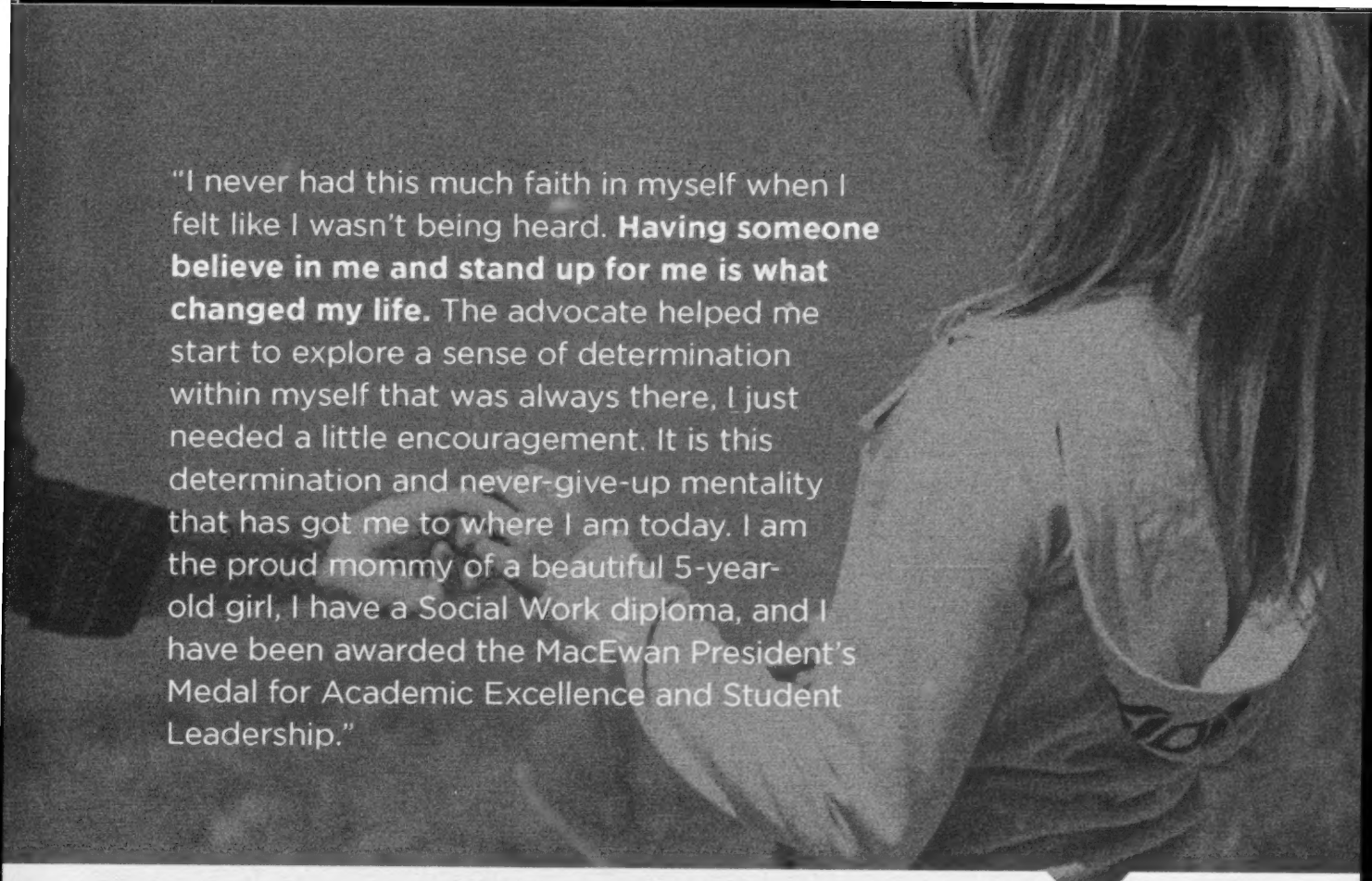
"She was really helpful at that time – would not have known what to do without her."

"I wish more kids would reach out to the advocate."

"Phone tag was challenging but understandable."

"He did not get back to me after the big meeting."

"I did not know when I would see him; it took too long, but I'm impatient."



"I never had this much faith in myself when I felt like I wasn't being heard. **Having someone believe in me and stand up for me is what changed my life.** The advocate helped me start to explore a sense of determination within myself that was always there, I just needed a little encouragement. It is this determination and never-give-up mentality that has got me to where I am today. I am the proud mommy of a beautiful 5-year-old girl, I have a Social Work diploma, and I have been awarded the MacEwan President's Medal for Academic Excellence and Student Leadership."

'SAMANTHA'
Former
Youth in Care

MEETING ADVOCACY STANDARDS

The OCYA has standards in place to ensure that young people receive quality advocacy services. The standards represent what is minimally expected by an advocate in providing services to a young person. The OCYA monitors for compliance with these standards. Independent contractors review closed files to ensure compliance with advocacy standards. Results of these reviews are posted on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca).

Each advocate's practice is monitored for compliance with the service standards in the following areas:

- Responsiveness to referrals;
- Face-to-face contact with young people;
- Gathering information;
- Rationale to terminate involvement after gathering information or to provide advocacy services;
- Decision and rationale whether or not advocacy will be directed by the young person;
- Responsiveness to develop an advocacy plan;
- Involvement of young person in planning; and
- Recorded activity minimally every 60 days.

This is the fifth consecutive year that the OCYA has monitored for compliance with advocacy standards.

LOOKING AHEAD

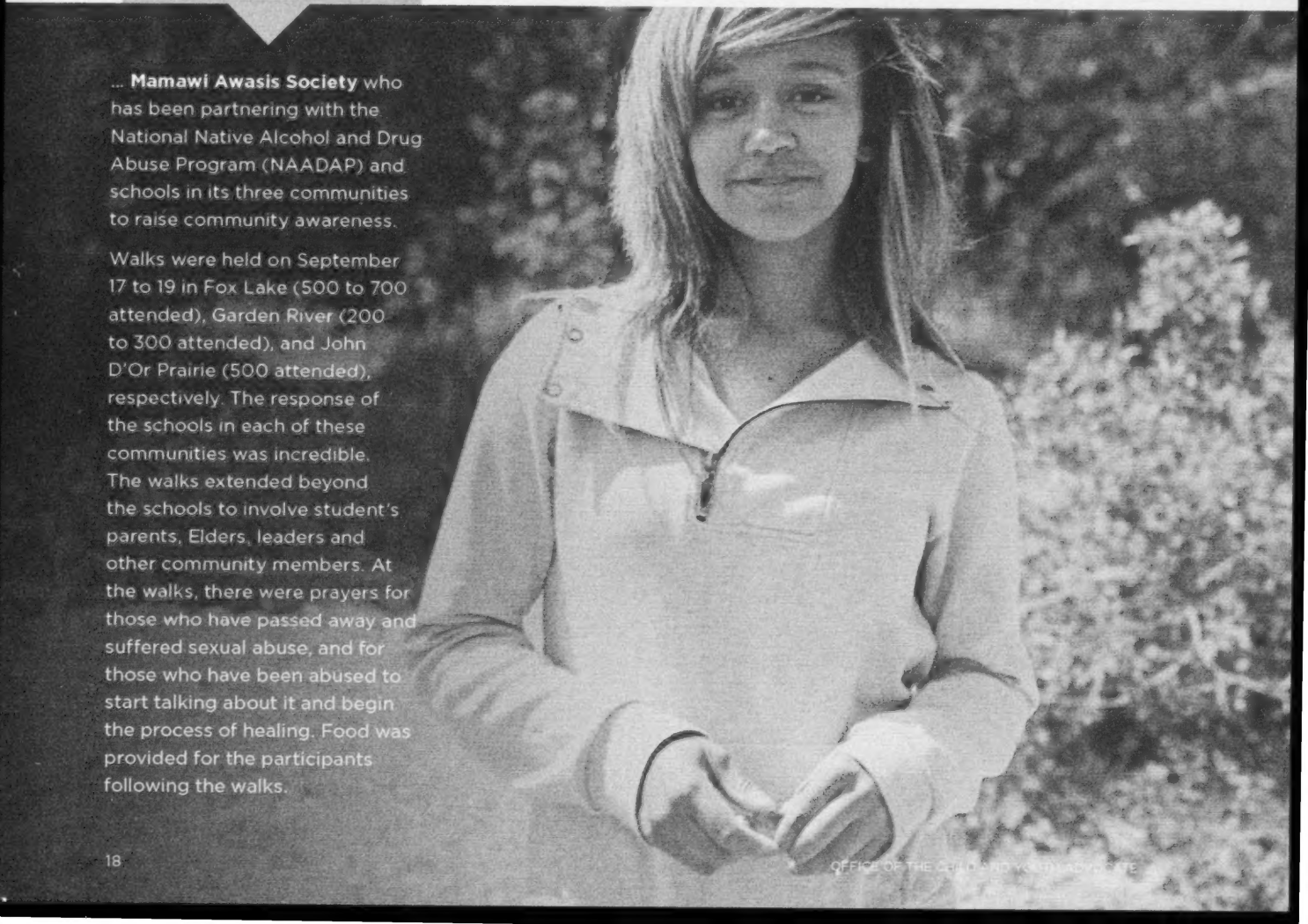
In the upcoming year, Advocacy Services will build on its efforts to remain responsive to the advocacy needs of young people. Advocacy occurs at many levels throughout the OCYA. Recognizing this, work will be undertaken to improve advocacy linkages within the office, so that the OCYA can provide a strong continuum of advocacy. Strategies will include:

- Revising the reporting of individual advocacy issues so that issues are consistently recorded, are clear and understandable when reported, and are linked with the rights identified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- Exploring better ways to connect with young people in the youth justice system;
- Continuing discussions with the Ministry of Human Services regarding what can be learned from mandatory notifications that are received;
- Continuing to explore ways in which young people will be involved in shaping the policy and practice of Advocacy Services; and
- Increasing engagement, understanding and relationships with Aboriginal young people, stakeholders and communities.

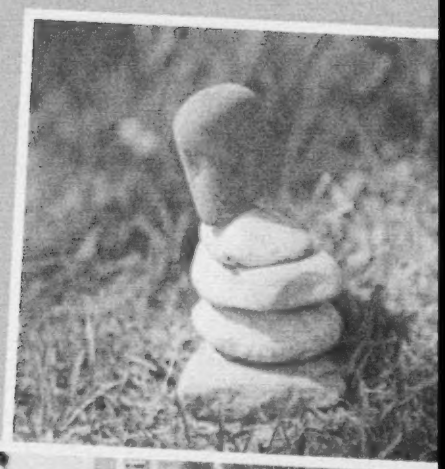
The OCYA appreciates...

... **Mamawi Awasis Society** who has been partnering with the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NAADAP) and schools in its three communities to raise community awareness.

Walks were held on September 17 to 19 in Fox Lake (500 to 700 attended), Garden River (200 to 300 attended), and John D'Or Prairie (500 attended), respectively. The response of the schools in each of these communities was incredible. The walks extended beyond the schools to involve student's parents, Elders, leaders and other community members. At the walks, there were prayers for those who have passed away and suffered sexual abuse, and for those who have been abused to start talking about it and begin the process of healing. Food was provided for the participants following the walks.



LEGAL REPRESENTATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE



PROVIDING LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Legal Representation for Children and Youth (LRCY) was established in 2006. This service provides independent legal representation for children and youth, under 18 years of age, who are receiving services or involved with an application under the *Enhancement Act*[4] or *PSECA*. Legal appointments are made to private practice lawyers on a rotational basis.

What young people have to say about their legal representation from OCYA

"My lawyer....

....did everything I asked."

....couldn't have been better."

....was condescending and distant."

....tried his best and listened."

....was unprepared, hurried and did not explain."

....was efficient, and made things easier to understand."

....was really good at explaining what happened in court."

4 With the exception of adoptions.

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2013-2014

RESPONDING TO THE LEGAL NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

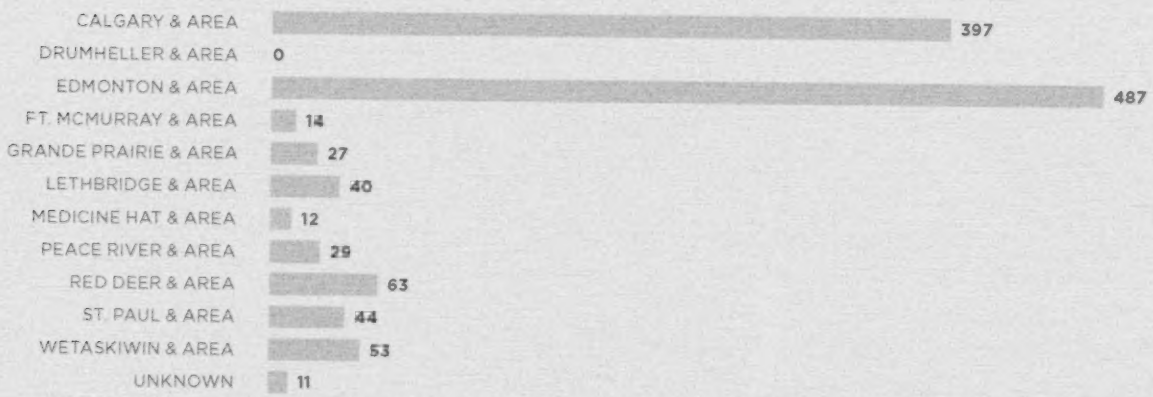
During 2013-2014, the total number of appointments was 1,177, which was a decrease of 87 appointments (7 per cent) from the previous fiscal year.

The total number of children who were appointed legal counsel was 1,865, which was a decrease of 236 children (11 per cent) from the previous fiscal year.

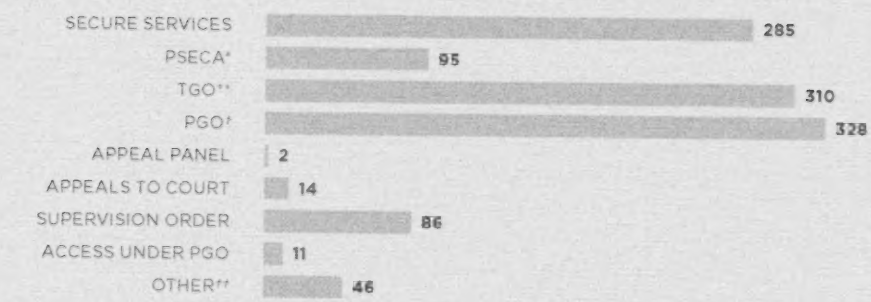
In March 2014, there were 84 lawyers on the LRCY roster throughout Alberta.

2013-2014

APPOINTMENTS BY COURT LOCATION (LRCY REGION) 2013-2014


CALGARY & AREA 397
DRUMHELLER & AREA 0
EDMONTON & AREA 487
FT. MCMURRAY & AREA 14
GRANDE PRAIRIE & AREA 27
LETHBRIDGE & AREA 40
MEDICINE HAT & AREA 12
PEACE RIVER & AREA 29
RED DEER & AREA 63
ST. PAUL & AREA 44
WETASKIWIN & AREA 53
UNKNOWN 11

APPOINTMENTS BY COURT MATTER



* *PSECA refers to confinement order applications under the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*

** *TGO refers to Temporary Guardianship Order applications*

† *PGO refers to Permanent Guardianship Order applications*

†† *"Other" includes: 1) guardianship applications under the Family Law Act for children with permanent guardianship status, and 2) applications regarding a youth's child (when the youth has Enhancement Act status)*

ENSURING THE DELIVERY OF QUALITY LEGAL SERVICES

LRCY has a Quality Assurance Framework that identifies the following outcomes for the legal services that are provided to child and youth clients:

- Consistent
- Child/youth friendly
- Easily accessible from anywhere in the province
- Timely
- Quality legal representation

Service standards for roster lawyers and program standards for LRCY staff have been established to support the achievement of these outcomes.

Lawyers report on their activities through invoicing and case reporting, specifically indicating whether they have met the required standards. These documents are reviewed for compliance on a regular basis through a Quality Assurance Review – one year after the lawyer is accepted onto the roster and then every two years thereafter.[5] The results of the review are shared with the lawyer so they can incorporate any feedback into their practice.

LRCY staff report on their activities, which are monitored for compliance to program standards on a monthly basis, and the results are shared with them.

ENGAGING YOUTH TO INFORM CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

To inform and help ensure continuous improvement of legal services, LRCY utilizes a process to obtain feedback from youth regarding the services they received from roster lawyers. Once a youth's legal matter is complete, a telephone survey is conducted to engage the young person and solicit their views. Youth who are 12 years of age or older are surveyed. All comments provided by young people are shared with their lawyer in a non-identifying manner. Lawyers have stated they appreciate the feedback they receive.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	LAST ACTUAL 2012-2013	TARGET 2013-2014	ACTUAL 2013-2014
Percentage of youth 12 years of age and over who indicate they are satisfied with their legal representation.	**97%***	**80%**	**90%**

** Result was based on 81 youth responding to survey.*

5 Quality Assurance Reviews may occur more frequently if concerns have been identified about a lawyer's practice.

During the past year, LRCY was able to complete 127 youth feedback surveys out of 426, which is a response rate of 30 per cent. The surveyor makes up to three attempts to contact each young person at varying times of the day or evening. Feedback was received regarding 54 roster lawyers. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 90 per cent of respondents stating they were happy with their legal services. Many said they liked their lawyer and that the services provided were "pretty good." Some youth said they would have liked more contact with their lawyer. Others said they would have preferred a different court outcome.

FOSTERING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILD LEGAL REPRESENTATION

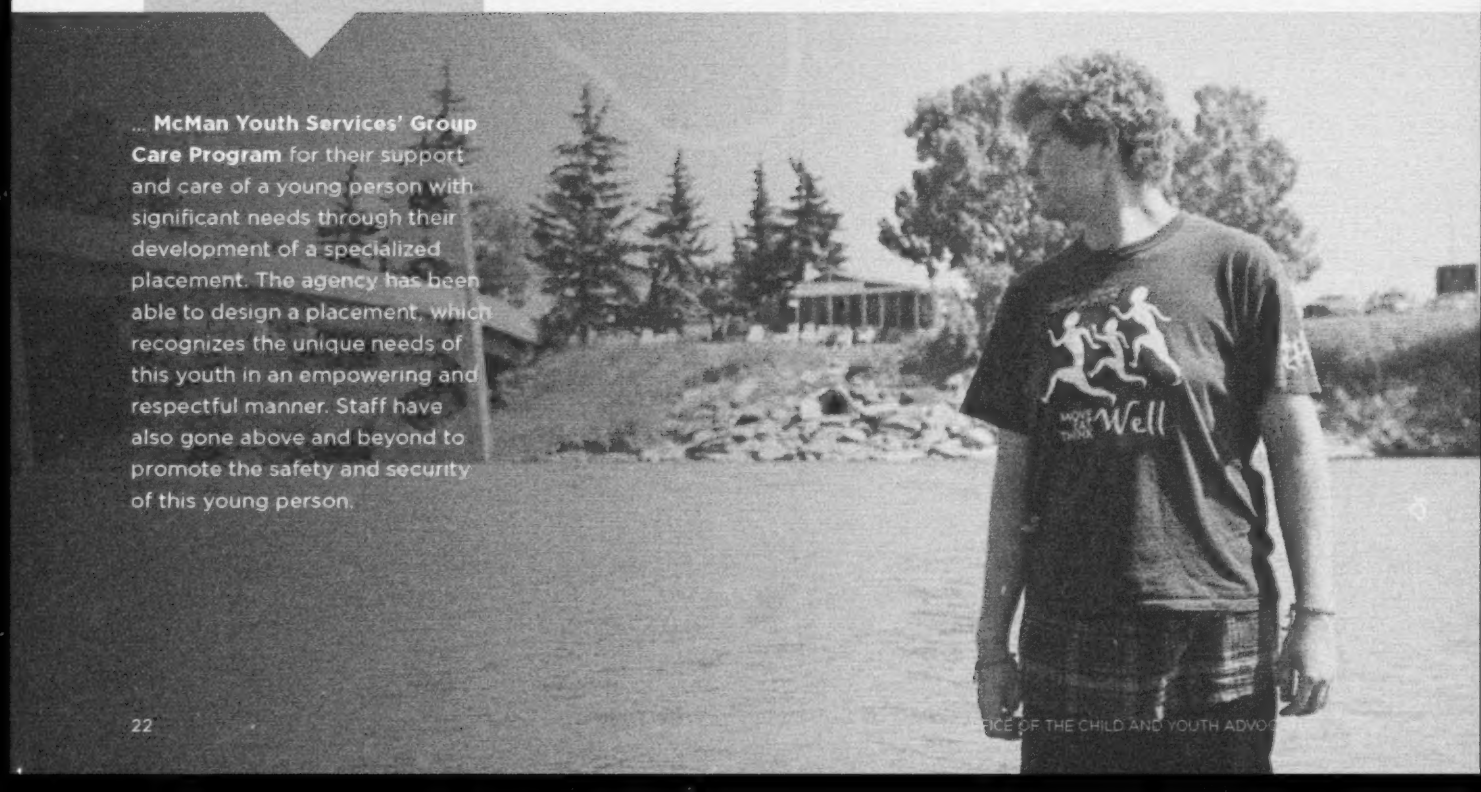
In March 2014, there were 84 lawyers on the LRCY roster throughout Alberta. For lawyers to maintain their membership on the roster, they must complete at least three hours of approved training per calendar year. During 2013-2014, LRCY offered a number of training sessions for roster lawyers on the following topics:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Interest Based Instructional Advocacy & Advanced Interviewing
- In the Best Interest of the Infant
- Cultural Awareness
- Legal Appointments and Payment System

A brown bag lunch series was also offered in Calgary and Edmonton. This series was facilitated by roster lawyers Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay in Edmonton, and Terri Mair and Jim Robertson in Calgary. The lunch hour sessions provided an opportunity for roster lawyers to network and discuss current relevant case law.

The OCYA appreciates...

... **McMan Youth Services' Group Care Program** for their support and care of a young person with significant needs through their development of a specialized placement. The agency has been able to design a placement, which recognizes the unique needs of this youth in an empowering and respectful manner. Staff have also gone above and beyond to promote the safety and security of this young person.



HIGHLIGHTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The OCYA hosted its second Biennial "Best Practices in Child Legal Representation" Conference from October 27-29, 2013, in Jasper, Alberta.

The 2013 conference had a special focus on the rights of the child. Keynote addresses were made by the Honourable M. J. Savaryn, Provincial Court Judge, Family Division, Edmonton, Alberta; Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (www.fncaringsociety.com) and Associate Professor at the University of Alberta; and Dr. Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D. Senior Fellow of the Child Trauma Academy, a not-for-profit organization based in Houston, Texas (www.childtrauma.org/), adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago, and inaugural Senior Fellow of the Berry Street Childhood Institute, an Australian based centre of excellence. The conference offered 11 different sessions on a variety of topics including:

- Child Welfare & the Charter of Rights - Rachel Birnbaum & Nicholas Bala
- Alienation, High Conflict Separations, Child Welfare and the Family Justice System - Rachel Birnbaum & Nicholas Bala
- Searching for the Child's Voice in Parenting Capacity Assessments (PCA) - Peter Choate
- Guardianship Applications for Children in Care of the Director[6] - Sonja Lusignan
- Representing Young People: What We Can Learn From Each Other - Dale Hensley, Cathy Lane Goodfellow, Julie Hart
- Advancing Legal Recognition of Children's Rights through Intervener Status in the BC Polygamy Reference Case and the Omar Khadr Case before the Supreme Court: Benefits and Challenges - Kathy Vandergrift
- Advocating for the Young Client When There are Competing Interests - Evelyn Wotherspoon
- Chronic Neglect - Causes, Consequences and Implications for Child Advocacy - Evelyn Wotherspoon
- Representing Children and Youth in Massachusetts: Ethical Issues - Carol Rosensweig
- Emerging Practices in Child Intervention - Kim Spicer

One of the highlights of the conference was an interactive panel discussion made up of young people and roster lawyers, who responded to key questions regarding child legal representation.

Over 100 people attended the conference including lawyers, child intervention staff, psychologists, social workers and young people. Feedback from participants was extremely positive.

6 Director refers to the Director as per the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act.*

KEEPING PACE WITH THE LEGAL NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important that the child legal representation provided by LRCY is consistent and of high quality. This includes making sure that the rights and voices of young people are paramount for the lawyers assisting young people. To ensure LRCY legal services are effectively meeting the needs of young people in these ways, the OCYA engaged an independent consultant to review LRCY policies and lawyer eligibility criteria. The review included consultations with young people, lawyers and stakeholders; research on best practices in child legal representation; and an examination of current policies and procedures.

The draft report, completed in September 2013, identified recommendations that included increased training requirements for roster lawyers, opportunities for additional mentoring and increased specialization in child legal representation. An implementation plan is being developed, with the expectation that most of the recommendations will be implemented by 2016. Once implemented, the recommendations will help enhance the quality and consistency of legal representation provided to young people.

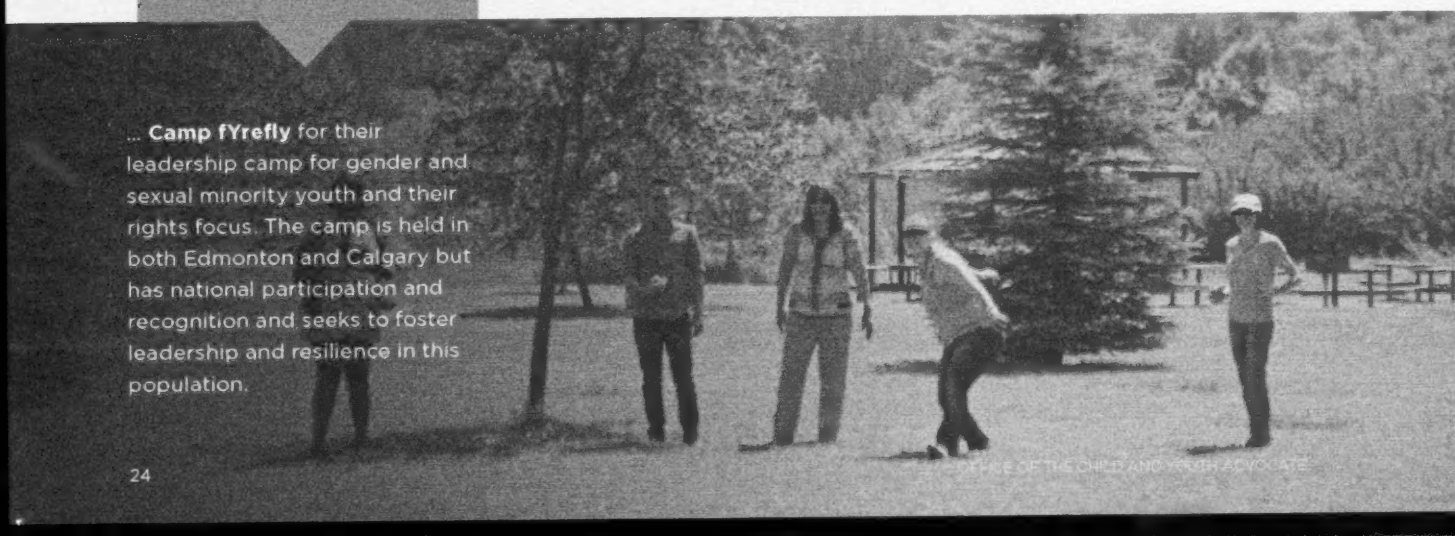
LOOKING AHEAD

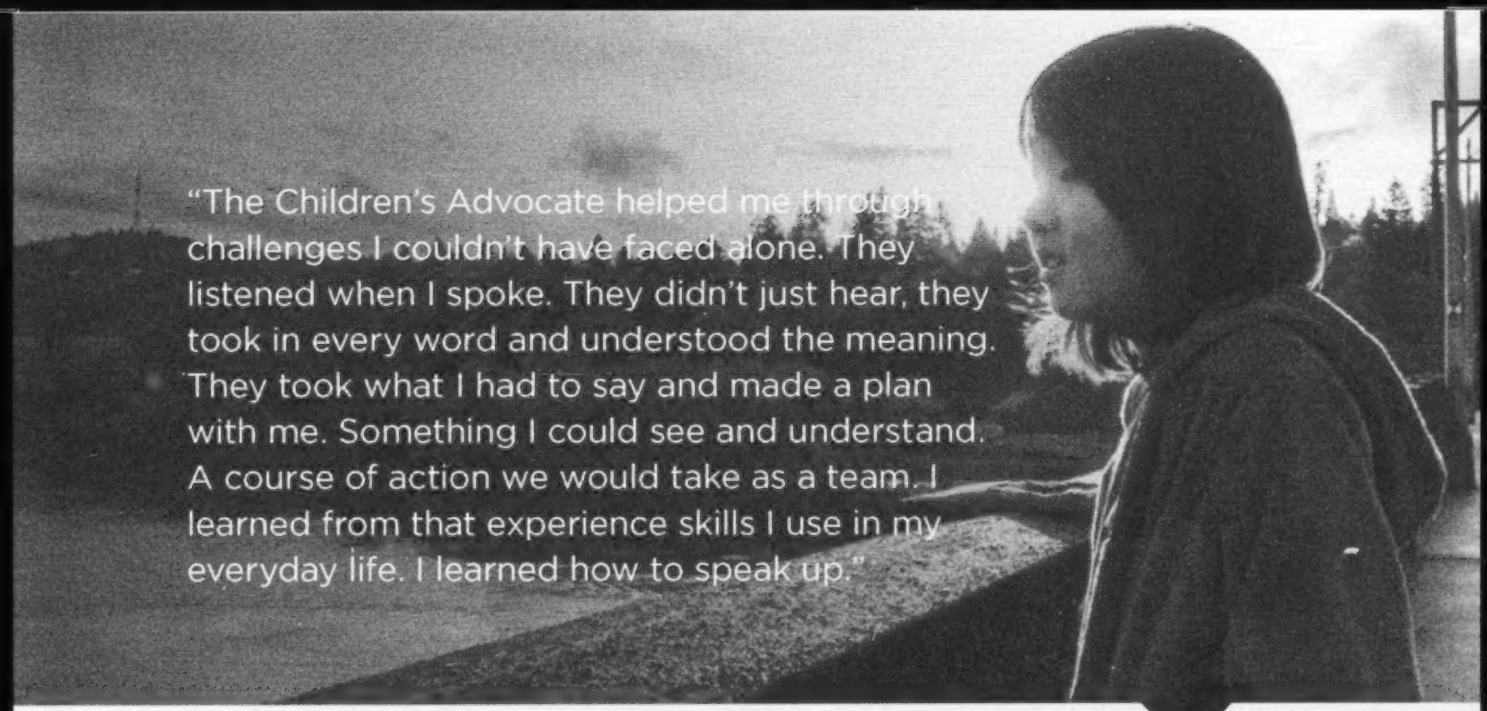
In the upcoming year, LRCY will continue efforts to ensure that high quality and consistent legal representation is provided to children and youth by:

- reviewing the recommendations contained in the roster review and implementing those that are accepted;
- providing education about the importance of independent legal representation for young people when there are matters before the court that concern them;
- providing relevant training opportunities for roster lawyers;
- continuing established quality assurance activities; and
- planning a third Biennial LRCY Conference to be held in Calgary in May 2015.

The OCYA appreciates...

... **Camp fYrefly** for their leadership camp for gender and sexual minority youth and their rights focus. The camp is held in both Edmonton and Calgary but has national participation and recognition and seeks to foster leadership and resilience in this population.




"The Children's Advocate helped me through challenges I couldn't have faced alone. They listened when I spoke. They didn't just hear, they took in every word and understood the meaning. They took what I had to say and made a plan with me. Something I could see and understand. A course of action we would take as a team. I learned from that experience skills I use in my everyday life. I learned how to speak up."

'JILL'
Youth in Care

QUALITY ASSURANCE (INVESTIGATIONS)

On April 1, 2012, with the implementation of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, the Advocate assumed the responsibility to "investigate systemic issues arising from a serious injury to or the death of a child who was receiving a designated service at the time of the injury or death if, in the opinion of the Advocate, the investigation is warranted or in the public interest."[7]

Designated services include any service under the *Enhancement Act* (with the exception of adoptions) as well as open or closed custody through the youth justice system. At the request of the Advocate, the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* was amended in November 2013 to expand the Advocate's mandate to review the serious injury or death of young people receiving services under the *Enhancement Act* up to the age of 22 years.[8]

The OCYA fulfills this mandate by undertaking Investigative Reviews when necessary. An Investigative Review does not assign legal responsibilities, nor does it replace or determine the need for other processes that may occur, such as investigations or prosecutions under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. The intent of an Investigative Review is not to find fault with specific individuals, but to identify and advocate for system improvements that will help enhance the overall safety and well-being of children who are receiving designated services. Fundamentally, an Investigative Review is about learning lessons, rather than assigning blame.

7 *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, S.A. 2011, c. C-11.5, s.9(2)(d). Serious injury is defined as a life threatening injury to the child or an injury that may cause significant impairment to the child's health.

8 This Advocate's mandate was previously limited to young people under 18 years of age.

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2013-2014

ENHANCING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The OCYA worked with the Ministry of Human Services to enhance policies and procedures that will help facilitate the Advocate's investigative mandate. As a result of this work, the Ministry of Human Services established processes that will result in the more timely provision of file documentation to the Advocate. Work is also continuing on the establishment of a workable definition of "serious injury," and on identifying expedient and efficient ways of sharing information.

Another area of work concerns reports of serious injury or death of young people receiving services from the youth justice system while in open or closed custody. To date, the Advocate has not received any of these reports. While there are established reporting processes in place with the Ministry of Human Services, there is still work to be done to formalize the system with youth justice.

Policy for investigative reviews has been drafted and is expected to be finalized in the near future.

REFINING THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

In an effort to continuously improve, the investigative process was refined over the past year. In particular, an increased level of scrutiny occurs at the initial stages when a report of death or serious injury is received by the Advocate. In addition to reviewing information available on electronic records, the Advocate now contacts others involved in the situation to confirm their information about the event. This ensures that the Advocate is obtaining information from more than one source. This initial stage is now referred to as the "Examination" phase.

The performance measures were refined during the last year to more realistically reflect the length of time it should take to conduct investigative reviews. When the Advocate first assumed this work, the goal was that a full review would be completed within six months. However, there were significant considerations that were not taken into account at that time. Most importantly, timing for family members and others involved with the young person; secondly, the length of time to receive information from outside the Ministry of Human Services; and finally, the time it takes to work through the full process, which includes ensuring the accuracy of the facts, the privacy of the young person and their family and conducting interviews in a sensitive and timely manner.

The new targets are:

- All serious injuries to or deaths of young children or youth receiving designated services are reviewed within four months of being reported to the Child and Youth Advocate to determine if an investigation is required.
- Investigations into serious injuries or deaths will be completed within one year of determination that an investigation is required.

All reports of serious injury or death are examined. A short summary report is produced that includes rationale for whether or not to proceed to the next phase of the review process, which is now referred to as "Assessment."[9] Assessments include all of the steps in an Examination as well as a detailed review of the Ministry's hard copy files. At the end of the Assessment phase a report is completed which includes a recommendation and rationale for whether or not to proceed to a full Investigative Review. A flow chart outlining the investigative process for serious injury or death appears on the following page.

If the recommendation is to proceed, systemic issues are identified. These form the basis of a Terms of Reference for the Investigative Review. The Terms of Reference are discussed with the Ministry of Human Services' Council for Quality Assurance, for their input and feedback.

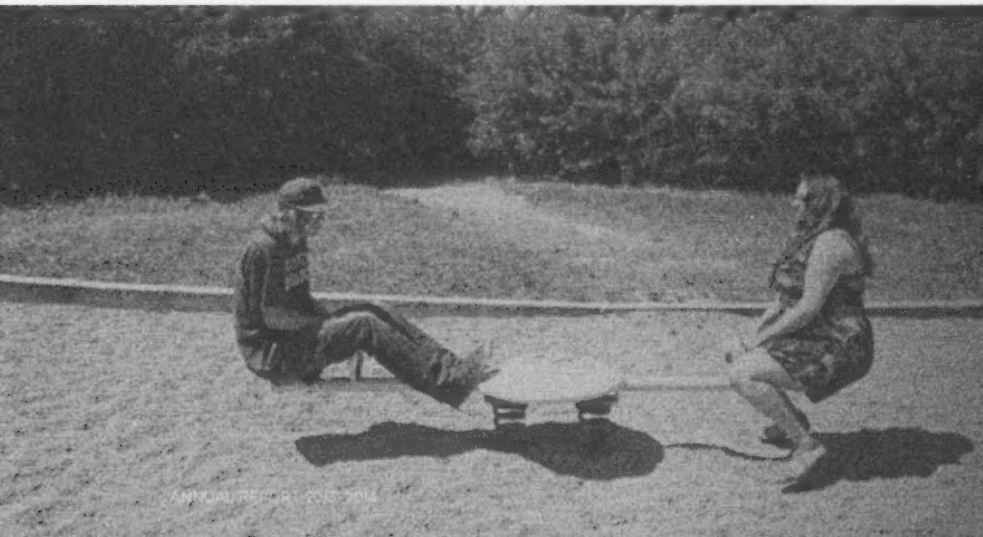
The full Investigative Review includes interviews with individuals familiar with the young person and their situation, as well as interviews with family members, caregivers and professionals. The information from these interviews is privileged, meaning that it is not shared or disclosed for any purpose and must be protected according to the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. The records created by the OCYA are exempt from disclosure as per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This privileged communication helps ensure the integrity of Investigative Reviews.

Investigative Reviews also include research and reviews of any other relevant documentation. A draft report is prepared, which summarizes the young person's circumstances and any relevant systemic issues. A committee of subject matter experts is then convened, who examine the draft report and provide input into the findings and recommendations. The composition of the committee is tailored to the identified issues and the areas of expertise required.

With the benefit of the committee's input, a final Investigative Review report is completed and released to the public. Consistent with our legislative requirements, the report does not provide any identifying information about the young person.

9 Previously referred to as "Initial Assessment," the terminology was changed to more adequately reflect the level of assessment that is conducted and to be less similar to the terminology used by Child Intervention Services.

The OCYA appreciates...



... the work of the **Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge** in supporting initiatives that strive to improve circumstances for Aboriginal young people living in their city. Some example of their initiatives include human rights education and support for young people facing discrimination and the annual "Dare to Achieve Aboriginal Youth Conference."

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

INVESTIGATIONS PROCESS FOR SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH: CHILD INTERVENTION SERVICES

- Initial alert
- Report of serious injury or death

EXAMINATION

- Review report, electronic child intervention record and collateral contacts and provide recommendation

Assessment required?

- N
  - Record information and decision
  - Advise Ministry
  - Advise CQA
  - Close file
- Y
  - Notify Ministry and request intervention files
  - May notify family
  - Notify CQA

ASSESSMENT / PRE-INVESTIGATION

- Review files and collateral contacts, complete assessment identifying potential systemic issues and make recommendation

Investigative review required?

- N
  - Record information and decision
  - Advise Ministry
  - Advise CQA
  - Close file
- Y
  - Notify Ministry
  - May notify family
  - Notify CQA

INVESTIGATIVE REVIEW

- Draft terms of reference
- Consult with CQA regarding scope
- CQA provides input
- Incorporate feedback
- Finalize Terms of Reference and Investigation Plan
- Conduct interviews, review additional documentation, research, draft report
  - May review with family
  - Convene committee to discuss findings and recommendations. Committee is chaired by the Advocate.
  - Privacy Review
  - Legal Review
  - Administrative Fairness Review
- Report is finalized
- Communication plan
- Meetings with affected Ministry staff

FINAL NON-IDENTIFYING REPORT RELEASED

Sequence and/or time frame may vary depending on circumstances

FULFILLING OUR INVESTIGATIVE ROLE

Between April 1, 2013 and March 31, 2014, the OCYA released three Investigative Review reports arising from incidents that occurred during the previous year.

Remembering Brian

Brian was a Métis youth who took his own life when he was 16 years old. He was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order and living with his aunt when he died. The Investigative Review examined four systemic issues, resulting in five recommendations. The issues were:

- Ensuring Balance in Delivering Intervention Services;
- Developing and Maintaining Children's Cultural Connections;
- Providing Support to Kinship Caregivers;
- Delivering Child Intervention Services across Regions.

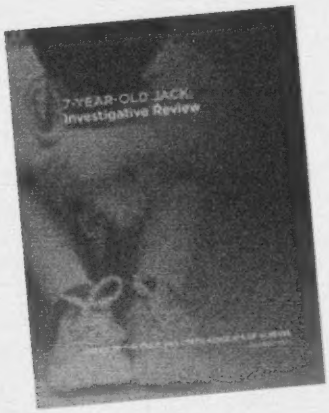
Kamil: An Immigrant Youth's Struggle

Kamil was a 17-year-old youth of Middle-Eastern ancestry who took his own life. He was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order and living with his sister when he died. He immigrated to Canada with his sisters when he was 12 years old. The Investigative Review examined four systemic issues, resulting in five recommendations. The issues were:

- Understanding the Cultural Context;
- Building Protective Factors in Children and Youth;
- Managing Medication for Mental Health Diagnoses;
- Enhancing the Quality of Decision-Making.

The OCYA appreciates...

... the innovative day treatment program by **Hull Child and Family Services.** The Pre-adolescent Treatment Program has developed an incredible program designed to meet the individual child's needs. Developed with Dr. Bruce Perry, this program allows the child to remain in their home environment, while accessing the Trauma informed treatment during the day. The Day Treatment Program allows one-to-one staffing for a child, and will accompany the child home to help the child and caregiver during their most challenging times. As a result, more children are going home and/or staying in home, while getting healing through trauma informed therapy.



7-Year-Old Jack

Jack was a Caucasian boy who drowned in a public pool when he was seven years old. He was the subject of a Temporary Guardianship Order and living in a group home when he passed away. The Investigative Review examined five systemic issues, resulting in five recommendations. The issues were:

- Supporting Key Relationships for Children in Care;
- Court Delays for Children in Temporary Care;
- Designing and Evaluating Interventions in a Team Context;
- Ensuring Lessons are Learned Province-wide;
- Decision-making after a Child in Temporary Care Passes Away.

During this reporting period (2013-2014), the Advocate also concluded four assessments on young people who died in the previous year (2012-2013).

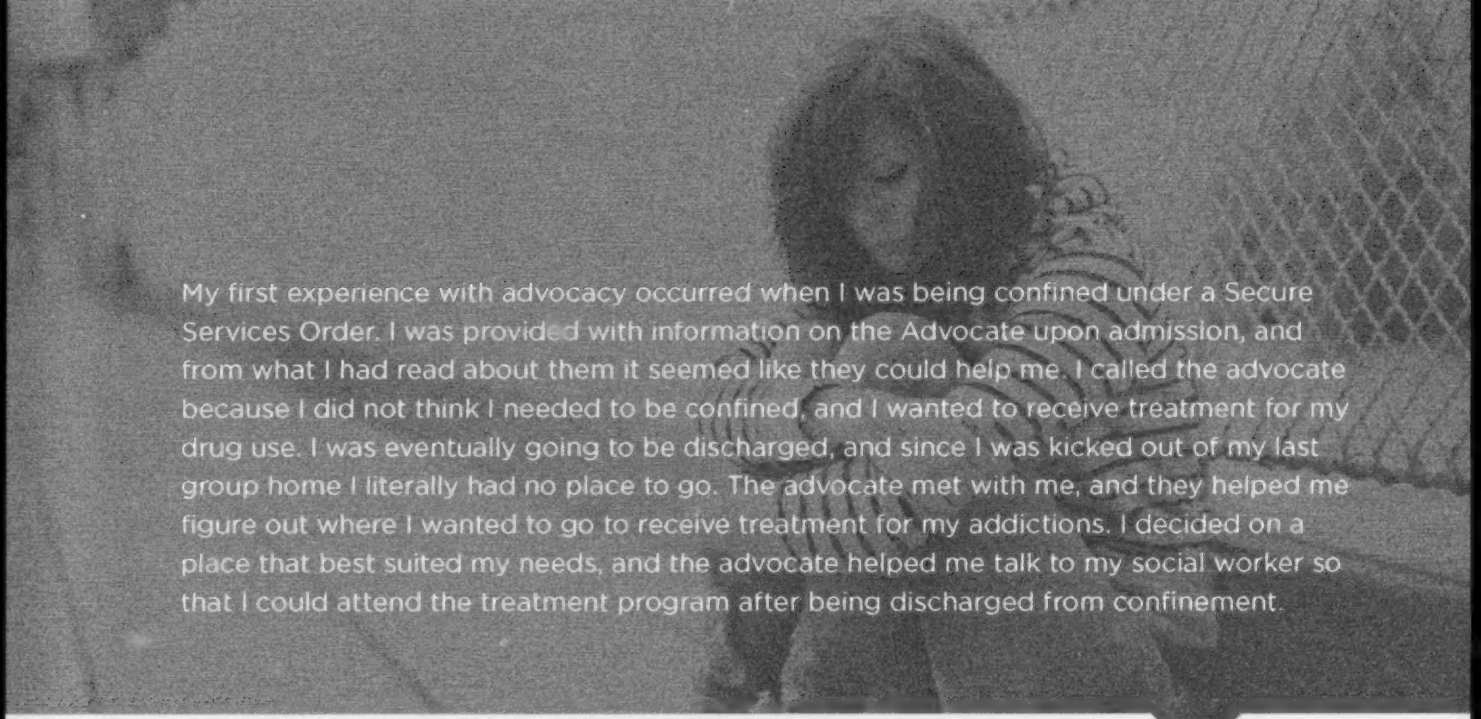
During the past year, the Advocate received 35 reports of the serious injury or death of young people receiving child intervention services:

- 10 serious injuries
- 25 deaths
  - 14 closed at Examination
  - 21 moved to Assessment; as of March 31, 2014:
    - 2 closed at Assessment
    - 2 approved for full Investigative Review
    - 17 were still at Assessment - as of September 30, 2014: 6 were closed at Assessment; 8 were approved for full Investigative Review; and the remaining 3 were still in progress. All to be reported on in 2014-2015.

Appendix A contains a brief description of reports that were concluded, including the circumstances of the young people involved and the results of the information reviewed. Appendix B provides a list of the recommendations made by the Advocate in Investigative Review reports released during the past year.

The OCYA appreciates...

... the staff at **iHuman** and say, "you folks are awesome!" This non-profit agency has supported so many young people who have found themselves in very high-risk situations and lifestyles often feeling they have nowhere to turn. The art, fashion, music and dance studios attract young people and offer ways to express their talents and their realities. Their innovative programming continues to support young people in overcoming many challenges. We look forward to continue working with you all in the future as you move into your "own" space this fall.



My first experience with advocacy occurred when I was being confined under a Secure Services Order. I was provided with information on the Advocate upon admission, and from what I had read about them it seemed like they could help me. I called the advocate because I did not think I needed to be confined, and I wanted to receive treatment for my drug use. I was eventually going to be discharged, and since I was kicked out of my last group home I literally had no place to go. The advocate met with me, and they helped me figure out where I wanted to go to receive treatment for my addictions. I decided on a place that best suited my needs, and the advocate helped me talk to my social worker so that I could attend the treatment program after being discharged from confinement.

'SAMANTHA'
Former
Youth in Care

LOOKING AHEAD

The OCYA expects that its investigative review mandate may be expanded[10] following the Ministry of Human Services Roundtable on Child Intervention held in January 2014. The Advocate will work to secure the necessary resources to fulfill any expansion in mandate.

For the upcoming year:

- A minimum of six full Investigative Reviews will be completed and released;
- All outstanding work from the previous year will be addressed and reported;
- Reports of serious injury or death will be examined within two weeks;
- Reports of serious injury or death will be reviewed within four months to determine whether a full Investigative Review is required; and
- Additional investigative resources will be secured as needed.

Throughout this work, the Advocate is committed to learning from its investigative work and incorporating this learning to ensure reviews are thorough and inform practice. It is imperative that the Advocate's reviews are useful and result in positive changes that will improve the safety and well-being of young people.

Next year will also feature some organizational change. In order to focus greater attention on quality assurance processes, this arm of work will fall under the responsibility of the Executive Director. A Quality Assurance Framework and a three-year plan for the OCYA will be developed.

10 Subsequent to this reporting period, on May 14, 2014, the legislation was amended to include children who had received Child Intervention Services within two years of their death.

STRATEGIC SUPPORT

SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE ADVOCATE

Strategic Support provides strategic advice and business services to the OCYA in areas of finance, budget and business planning, information management and technology, human resources, accommodations and administrative services.

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2013-2014

ENHANCING OUR CAPACITY TO ASSIST YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2013-2014, the OCYA approved a new Health and Wellness Strategic Plan that takes a comprehensive approach to organizational health and wellness, personal health and well-being, and occupational health and safety. The foundation of the plan is to strengthen the delivery of services to the OCYA's clients and support OCYA employees in achieving the organization's business and operational plan goals. This will be accomplished by implementing strategies and initiatives that promote health and wellness through education, prevention, communication, fostering relationships and workplace safety.

Significant progress was also made during the past year in addressing the OCYA's accommodation needs. At the end of August 2014, the OCYA will move to a new location in downtown Edmonton that will support the organization's growing capacity to advocate for children and youth.

ADDRESSING INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Consistent with the OCYA's position as an independent office of the Legislature, work continued on disengaging the OCYA's information technology operations and systems from the Ministry of Human Services.

To support the organization, a new data centre has been established in the OCYA's new office. This data centre will be shared with the Offices of the Ombudsman, the Public Interest Commissioner and the Ethics Commissioner. This initiative allows the four Legislative Offices to share hardware infrastructure, network and server resources. Shared services

creates an opportunity to provide cost effective information technology delivery to the OCYA and its legislative office partners. The new system will also support the OCYA's future growth and technology needs.

Also in 2013-2014, a consultant was engaged to identify requirements for a new system to track investigations, systemic issues, recommendations made by the Advocate, public education, and quality assurance.

To improve access to our files, a major records management project was completed this past year. Over 10,000 files were inventoried, boxed and moved to off-site storage in preparation for our relocation to the new Edmonton premises. Through this process, we began the development of a simplified classification and retention schedule that will ensure consistency in application of our records management policies and practices.

LOOKING AHEAD

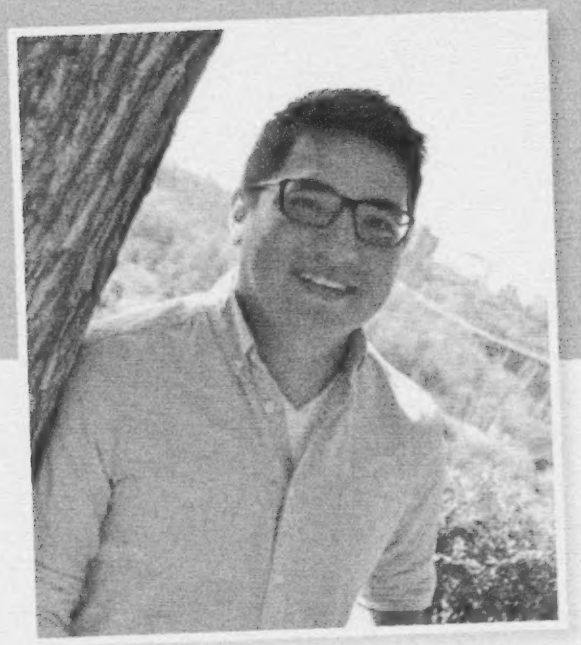
The upcoming year for Strategic Support will be exciting and challenging. Key initiatives will include:

- Developing and implementing a practice framework with a common set of principles that will guide all the work of the OCYA with or on behalf of young people, their families, communities and Albertans;
- Working with Alberta Infrastructure to facilitate the planning and construction of the new Edmonton office space, and coordinating the relocation of staff to the new office;
- Leading the migration of information technology operations and systems into the new Legislative Offices' shared data centre;
- Continuing the planning and implementation of a new investigation system and an issues tracking system;
- Guiding the implementation of strategies and initiatives that support the OCYA's Health and Wellness Strategic Plan, along with developing a review and assessment process;
- Developing a Human Resources' Recruitment Plan that supports the evolving mandate of the OCYA; and
- Finalizing the redevelopment of the Administrative, Financial and Information Management and Technology Policies and Procedures Manual.

The OCYA appreciates...

...**Mamowe Opikihawasowin Tribal Chief Child & Family Services (West) Society** for hosting their 2014 Cultural Camp. The camp, an annual event, is held over one week, and had over 239 participants this year, more than double the number of participants in previous years. The Society staff, Board of Directors and leadership live by and practice their traditions and cultural values by sharing them with their children, youth, and families. They promote traditional values through teachings from Elders and experiential learning, such as traditional parenting and cooking practices.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...



ELLIOTT YOUNG

Aboriginal Engagement Consultant, OCYA

Each morning, I am eager to start my day and get to the office because I get to work with and for disadvantaged and marginalized Aboriginal young people. Knowing that I get to educate Aboriginal youth about their rights as young people and Indigenous people makes every day a great experience. Once they learn about their rights, I am able to teach them how to advocate for those rights for themselves and on behalf of their peers. Building their advocacy capacity is important because it allows Aboriginal people to become self-determining individuals. With a background focused on Aboriginal Self-Governance, building advocacy capacity in Aboriginal young people is just one more step to Aboriginal people becoming self-determining nations.

"Knowing that I get to educate Aboriginal youth about their rights as young people and Indigenous people makes every day a great experience."

Through workshops and interactive play, I teach these young people about Children's rights and how to advocate for themselves. At times, I am amazed that part of my job is playing simple board games with these amazing young people to help them better themselves and their communities.

Along with interacting with Aboriginal young people, I am also involved with the Aboriginal community on many different levels. It ranges from conducting a rights presentation to helping organize a National Aboriginal Day celebration or Christmas Round dance. It's important to be involved in the Aboriginal community because our office develops partnerships with all stakeholders to ultimately address the issue of over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the Child Intervention system. This is why I am so passionate about my work at the OCYA.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

KELLY STRATFORD

Manager of Advocacy Services South, OCYA

I lead a team of seven individual advocates based in Calgary. My day-to-day activities are rarely the same. However, there are three common elements to my days: My focus is on ensuring young people receive quality advocacy services, every facet of my work involves collaboration, and I aim to lead, listen, learn, and laugh every day. Some activities that have filled my days this past year include: Leading practice discussions, consulting on matters affecting young people, identifying systemic trends, recommending and contributing to policy changes and development, engaging stakeholders to discuss experiences and matters of importance to young people and involving young people in staff recruitment.

I have spent the last 23 years in the public service working with, or on behalf of young people, their families, and communities. Throughout this time, I have had the privilege to learn from young people about what makes them feel heard, connected, secure, and hopeful. I have also learned how their lives are impacted when they do not feel this way. I have been joyful when young people have known that they are cherished, and been saddened when young people have felt alone or forgotten. These lessons and experiences, along with a passion for child and human rights, guide all aspects of my work both as a leader in individual advocacy and in my collaborative work across the OCYA.

"I have had the privilege to learn from young people about what makes them feel heard, connected, secure, and hopeful. I have also learned how their lives are impacted when they do not feel this way."

I have known many young people who have families, caregivers, community members, and service providers who care deeply about, and want the best for them. However, at times, factors such as addiction, poor health, poverty, budget restraints, high caseloads, or politics challenge their ability to focus on what is important to young people. These are the times that young people need advocates, informal or formal, and these are the opportunities to work with, or on behalf of young people to make positive impacts in their lives. I am proud to lead a team who bring their passion, respect, knowledge, and caring to each of these opportunities.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

JENILLE WONG

Intake Advocate, OCYA

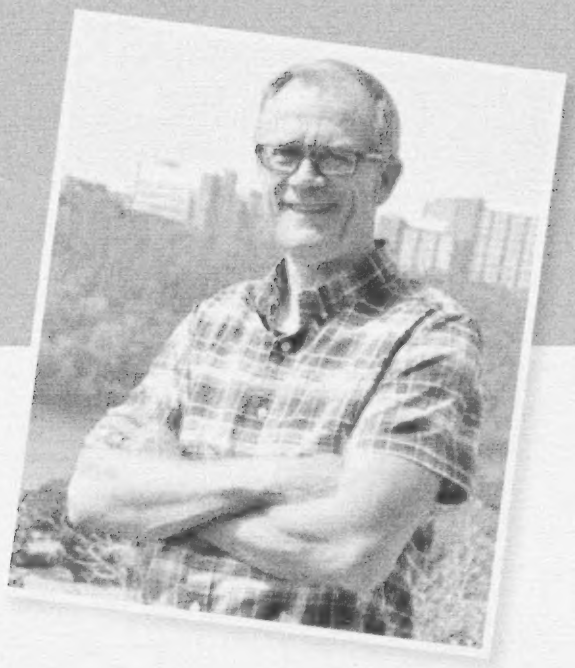
My role as an Intake Advocate is complex in nature and every day is a unique experience. In addition to being the first contact for community referrals, I provide informal education of advocacy services, strategies and resources. My role also requires assessment skills and knowledge of evolving social and emotional needs of children and youth.

Listening to the raw opinions and experiences of young people who are determined for change adds to the growing awareness of the adversity they face on a daily basis. To be considered in decisions that impact our lives is important to everyone and vulnerable children and youth should be given that chance to be valued in these moments.

In my previous work with youth in residential care, I listened to them express their frustration with decisions influenced by policies and their feeling of not being in control of what happens for them. I am more determined to ensure that my service with the office of the Child and Youth Advocate provides children and youth a safe space to express their viewpoints as well as supports them in their advocacy skill development. I am truly proud to be a part of an organization that seeks to bridge gaps, giving children and youth an equal chance to be fully considered in their community.

"To be considered in decisions that impact our lives is important to everyone and vulnerable children and youth should be given that chance to be valued in these moments."

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...



CHRIS HANSON

Advocate North Office, OCYA

I am an advocate and I have the best job in the world. Every day I get to meet, talk, and work with amazing and cool children and youth from birth to age 24. These young folks may receive services from Child and Youth Services, Youth Justice or the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*. Their life journey has usually been traumatic.

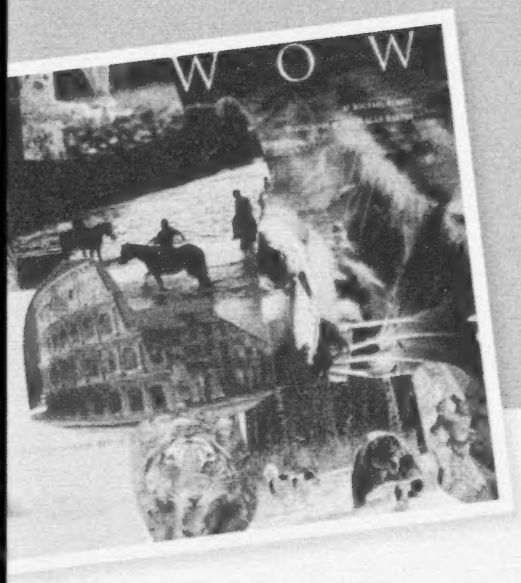
I get to meet these awesome kids in foster homes, kinship care homes, schools, group homes, young offender centres, adult jails, mental health centers and hospitals. I also meet children with their counselor, doctor, mother, father, lawyer, teacher, child care worker, probation officer, social worker or psychologist. I may find myself on the floor asking a four or five year old what it was like moving three times in the past year. I might phone or meet with a doctor who has concerns about a child's physical health, mental health, FASD, medication, or the care they are receiving. I might visit a young man in jail who has learned that someone decided he cannot visit his daughter or that his lawyer isn't listening to him.

My job for younger children is to ensure that decision makers have all the information they need to make decisions. To do that I must do my best to look at the world through the eyes of the children. I then ask decision makers to do the same.

When children get older they can instruct me so they become my boss. I speak to no one without his or her permission. I will help a young person prepare to meet with their social worker or their bosses. The meeting might be a chance to ask why they cannot visit or move back with their mother, father, or both. Or it could be that that they don't want to visit their bio family. So we do role plays, write letters, practice phone calls, practice leaving a message for someone who could change their lives. We do that together. Then the young person decides when and where they want to meet with these adults. A place that is safe for them may not be in a government office or their own home. The right "to be heard" means respectfully listening and encouraging a child to share their story. Sounds simple.

Thinking outside of the box is a must for so many of these children whose lives can be so complicated. These children come in all sizes, all colors and all cultures. We all need to learn about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and then explain these to children so they get it.

We all can be advocates for children. Try it today for one child. Look at the world through their eyes. Listen.



SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

ENGAGING THE BROADER COMMUNITY

The Systemic Advocacy and Outreach division is responsible for:

- Public Education;
- Aboriginal Engagement;
- Community and Youth Engagement;
- Communications; and
- Systemic Advocacy.

Systemic advocacy refers to advocacy that is intended to result in changes to a structure or system. This advocacy is typically undertaken at the policy and legislation level. The OCYA's systemic advocacy efforts focus on improving the circumstances for young people who are receiving designated services or wanting to receive these services.

Systemic advocacy occurs through a number of mechanisms, including:

- publishing reports and recommendations on systemic issues and issues affecting young people;
- engaging communities on issues affecting young people (e.g., youth suicide);
- encouraging and supporting child advocacy efforts of other organizations;
- organizing opportunities for young people to speak to decision makers (e.g., at public forums); and
- educating the public on the issues that matter to young people (e.g., through public education sessions and media coverage).

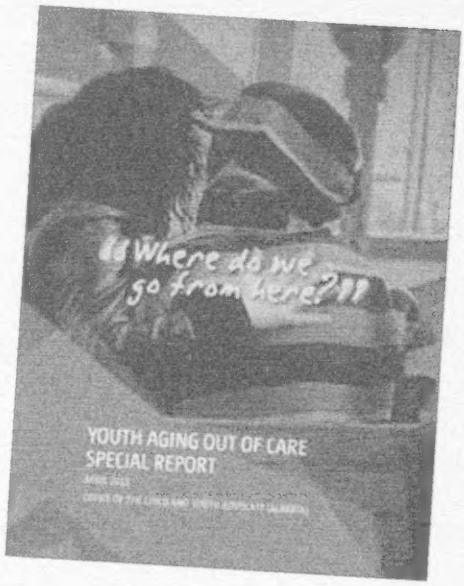
Outreach activities help build awareness about the OCYA, its mandate and the services it provides. As part of these activities, focus is placed on educating young people about their rights and the importance of exercising those rights. Organizations that provide services to children and youth are also important outreach audiences. By being aware of the rights of children and youth, and of the OCYA's work and services, organizations are better positioned to effectively assist and support the young people they serve.

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2013-2014

Highlights for the year were many, but followed a common theme. The focus was on supporting young people both to become aware of their rights and bringing attention to decision makers and the public about the importance of the rights of young people. These ranged from celebrations (National Child Day and National Aboriginal Day) to both challenging the Ministry of Human Services to improve the circumstances for youth aging out of care to collaborating with them to bring attention to the issue of youth suicide. We launched a newsletter for youth in care to inform them of their rights and partnered with the office of the Mental Health Patient Advocate and the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research to address the issue of mental health services for young people.

A CALL TO ACTION FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF CARE

Following the release of the OCYA's Special Report on youth aging out of care "Where do we go from here?", a supporting symposium was held on April 30, 2013. A variety of stakeholders, service providers and young people gathered to discuss the recommendations and how to implement them. The symposium was attended by 125 people and was webcast to over 528 different locations. A summary report from the symposium is available on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca).



BRINGING ATTENTION TO THE ISSUE OF YOUTH SUICIDE

In May 2013, the OCYA partnered with the Ministry of Human Services and the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research to host "Youth Suicide Awareness: A Learning Event." Provincial and national experts presented on the topic of youth suicide. Facilitated conversations occurred throughout the day linking theory to practice considerations. Youth voice was represented at the event through the performance of "Committing," a dramatic theatre production by the Stardale Group from Calgary. The group composed of Aboriginal girls, ranging in age from 10 to 17, shared their thoughts and experience with mental health and youth suicide. This successful event was streamed live via webcast, reaching an audience of over 1,500 individuals.

EXPANDING THE VOICE OF YOUTH INTO OUR WORK

During the past year, the OCYA's new Youth Advisory Panel met on four occasions. This panel consists of eight young people, appointed by the Advocate, who are supported by self-selected mentors. Panel members range in age from 14 to 21 years, and have experience with, or knowledge about, the government systems that fall within the OCYA's review and services mandate.

The young people on the panel reside throughout Alberta and First Nations communities, representing Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray, Lethbridge and Piikani/Brocket. Of the eight panel members, five young people identify as First Nations. The Youth Panel meets quarterly to provide advice and feedback to the OCYA.

Some of their work has included participating in consults for Legal Representation, organizational branding, the OCYA website, publications, and promotional materials for the office. The Youth Advisory Panel has had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Human Services to provide a youth perspective to the work of the Ministry with young people in care, and have also met with Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Caring Society of Canada to discuss advocacy and the over-representation of Aboriginal children and youth in care. Several members of the Youth Advisory Panel also presented to roster lawyers at the LRCY Conference.

The OCYA appreciates...

... **the Piikani Child and Family Services Prevention Team** who hosted their third annual Piikani Youth Forum in February 2014. Teens from all over Alberta attended the two-day event, which was open to youth between the ages of 14 and 18. Facilitators, influential figures, and even a celebrity or two assisted with forums, addressing issues like self-esteem, suicide, youth testimony, promiscuity, drugs, discrimination, heritage, moving into the future, and more. More than 300 people were in attendance.

The Piikani Child and Family Services Prevention Team also established the Piikani Youth Council made up of young people between the ages of 14 and 22. The aim of the council was to help develop leadership skills for the young people and host events for the Piikani Youth. They hosted their third annual pow wow with over 1,500 attendees.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

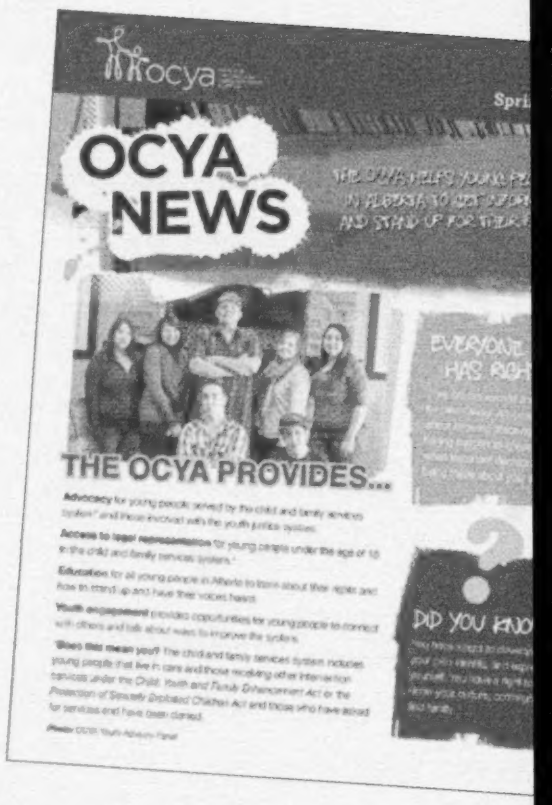
In June 2013, the OCYA helped organize a National Aboriginal Day event with the Canadian Native Friendship Centre, Alberta Native Friendship Association, Creating Hope Society, and the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights. This event helped bring attention to the rights, interests and viewpoints of Aboriginal young people.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL CHILD DAY

National Child Day, held on November 20th of each year, raises awareness about the rights of children and commemorates the adoption of *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The OCYA led provincial planning for National Child Day 2013, which featured the theme "We Want to be Heard." In collaboration with community agencies, a series of coordinated events were held across the province and in First Nations communities. The OCYA directed activities, including the distribution of art books and calendars that were created from submissions to an art contest held in the previous year that focused on child rights. The OCYA also released a video entitled "We Have a Voice," featuring a song that powerfully highlighted the importance of the voices of young people. The video can be viewed on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca).

LAUNCHING A NEWSLETTER FOR YOUTH

During 2013-2014, the OCYA launched a newsletter as part of educational efforts to inform young people about their rights in the Child Intervention system. The newsletter contained essential information about young people's rights and accessing services from the OCYA and introduced the OCYA Youth Advisory Panel to Albertans. The newsletter was mailed out to over 5,500 young people, aged 12 years and older, who are receiving services within the OCYA's mandate.


ocya

OCYA NEWS

THE OCYA PROVIDES...

Advocacy for young people served by the child and family services system and those involved with the youth justice system.

Access to legal representation for young people under the age of 18 in the child and family services system.

Education for all young people in Alberta to learn about their rights and how to stand up and have their voices heard.

Youth engagement provides opportunities for young people to connect with others and talk about ways to improve the system.

"Does this mean you? The child and family services system includes young people that live in care and those receiving other intervention services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* or the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* and those who have asked for services and have been denied.

Photo: OCYA Youth Advisory Panel

EVERYONE HAS RIGHTS

DID YOU KNOW

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS TO IDENTIFY SYSTEMIC ISSUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Collaborating with young people and stakeholders is an integral part of the OCYA's service delivery. The OCYA conducted 25 external engagement sessions across the province and in First Nations communities. These sessions included engagement with young people, Child and Family Services Authorities, Delegated First Nation Agencies and community stakeholders. Participants provided their views and perspectives on current and emerging systemic issues. This input will be used to inform the OCYA's next Special Report. A summary of the issues is provided in the *October 2013 – March 2014 Service Report*, available on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca).

PARTNERING FOR ACTION TO MOBILIZE MENTAL HEALTH FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In February 2014, the Child and Youth Advocate and the Alberta Mental Health Patient Advocate hosted a Mental Health Symposium in collaboration with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research. More than 100 provincial leaders from different sectors and disciplines were invited to discuss and recommend actions to improve mental health outcomes for vulnerable children and youth with complex needs. These young people often need services from multiple providers, including various government ministries, health and other sectors. A summary report from the symposium is available on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca). A follow-up symposium will be held in October 2014 in Edmonton.

BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In an effort to improve our public education, we have a business plan measure tied to the evaluations handed out at presentations. Of the 244 surveys returned, 228 stated that they were more informed of the OCYA and the rights of young people after attending a public education session.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	LAST ACTUAL 2012-2013	TARGET 2013-2014	ACTUAL 2013-2014
Percentage of stakeholders that indicate they were more informed of the role of the OCYA and the rights of young people, after attending a public education session.	Measure under development	**80%**	**93%**

A central part of the Systemic Advocacy and Outreach Division's work is to promote and raise awareness about the rights of young people and to build advocacy capacity in communities. Highlights of outreach undertaken in 2013-2014 include the following:

- Delivery of 216 stakeholder presentations across the province and in First Nations communities. The primary audiences of these presentations were young people and organizations that directly provide them with services.
- Workshops at the Edmonton and Calgary locations of Camp fYrefly, a national LGBTQ leadership retreat for youth that supports the development of personal resiliency.
- Workshops at the Piikani Youth Forum.
- Child rights education sessions twice a month at the School at the Legislature. The Legislative Assembly Office's School at the Legislature program provides grade six students with an experiential learning opportunity regarding government, legislation and citizenship.
- Training sessions to new staff in the youth justice system at the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Training Academy.
- Conference presentations at the Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 Education Conferences, the Alberta Foster Parent Association, the Central Alberta College of Social Workers Conference, the Guidance Council of the Alberta Teacher's Association Conference and at the National Mentoring Conference.

- Promotion of the OCYA at 23 resource booths, including the FASD provincial conference and six Alberta Teacher's Association conferences.

In addition to this outreach, efforts were made to further build the OCYA's education capacity. During the past year, two OCYA public education staff became certified to facilitate the Rights Respecting Schools Initiative (RRS), and the OCYA became a member of the National Friends of Rights Respecting Schools. RRS is an education framework that uses the CRC to enhance awareness, inclusion and participation in classrooms, schools and communities.

During the past year, Advocacy Services facilitated a number of information sessions for young people at the Edmonton Young Offenders Centre (EYOC). Some of these young people were also involved in the Child Intervention system, which can make their circumstances difficult to navigate. Following these sessions, a number of young people requested the help of an advocate for issues in either the youth justice system or the Child Intervention system.

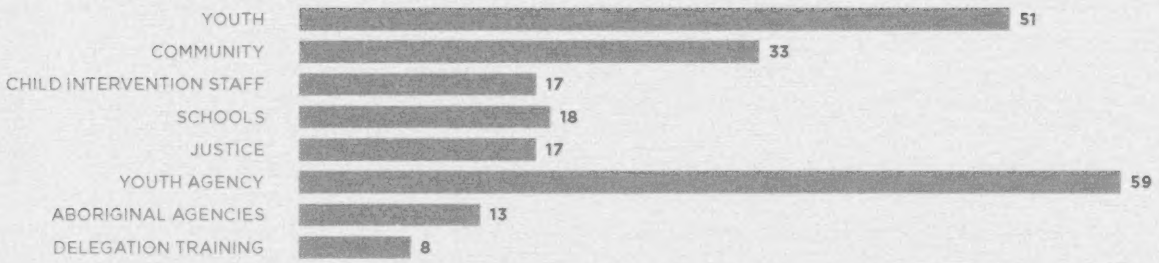
At the Calgary Young Offenders Centre (CYOC), Advocacy Services met with the staff and presented information on the rights of young people. Our Public Education and Aboriginal Engagement staff met with residents, spoke about the rights of young people, and facilitated some arts-based rights information sessions with the residents. The OCYA presented their National Child Day video, *"We Want to be Heard"* to a number of the residents and CYOC staff joined the Calgary area National Child Day Committee.

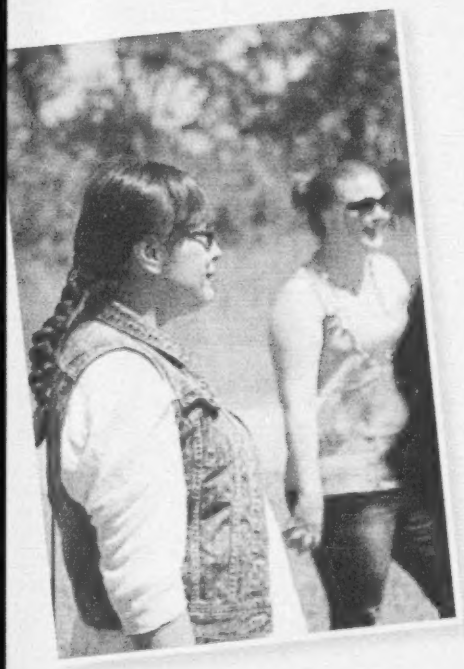
The OCYA appreciates...

... the staff at the **Medicine Hat Youth Action Society and Youth Wellness Centre** and their commitment to engage young people and promote their health and wellness. They operate from a youth directed perspective and believe that young people need to have a voice and be active participants to resolve issues that impact them. They have staff that work in collaboration with many community partners to support young people with resiliency and wellness in the Medicine Hat Area.

2013-2014

NUMBER OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTIVITIES BY AUDIENCE GROUP (PROVINCIAL)





PURSUING NEW OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Finding new ways to communicate with children and youth, and to those who support them, is an important part of the OCYA's work. Dialogue with these stakeholders helps ensure that children and youth are aware of the services provided by the OCYA. This gives the public confidence that vulnerable young people have a voice and are receiving the supports they need. This past year, the OCYA expanded its social media presence by introducing a Twitter account. It has become an excellent tool for sharing information about OCYA services, supporting public education and outreach initiatives, and generating public interest in the OCYA's Investigative Reviews and other reports. The OCYA's Twitter followers are steadily increasing. They include a range of young people, supporting agencies, stakeholders and media. Twitter holds great promise for raising awareness and supporting future OCYA events and initiatives.

IDENTIFYING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

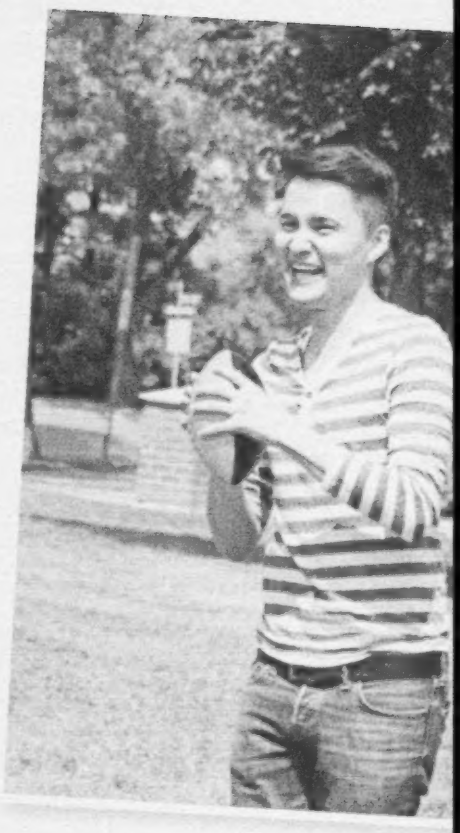
There are a number of ways in which the OCYA becomes aware of systemic issues facing young people. First, and most importantly, the OCYA hears directly from young people by way of their involvement with an advocate, the Youth Advisory Panel, or one of the many focus groups and events facilitated each year by the OCYA. The OCYA also hears from young people through its involvement in community activities and through social media.

Systemic issues are those that meet the following criteria:

- affect more than one young person;
- if not addressed, are likely to re-occur; and
- typically require a change to policy, regulation or legislation to resolve.

- The OCYA typically identifies systemic issues that are, or have the potential to be, widespread and arise from:
  - a policy or procedure;
  - the absence of a policy or procedure;
  - a service gap; or
  - a casework practice approach or problem.

Ongoing dialogue with service providers and other stakeholder groups provides another mechanism by which the OCYA learns about issues faced by young people. The OCYA also watches for changes and trends within service delivery systems and considers the impact these may have on young people. Regular reviews are also undertaken of child intervention and youth justice practices in other jurisdictions. By learning what is happening elsewhere, the OCYA is better positioned to identify and make recommendations about systemic issues.



In previous Annual Reports, the OCYA described three to five systemic issues identified during the year, as well as any outstanding issues from previous years. Going forward, the Annual Report will provide an overview of systemic issues identified in the reporting period. A complete list of systemic issues, and the progress achieved in addressing the Advocate's recommendations will be published twice per year as part of the service reporting process. Completed service reports are posted on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca).

Systemic Issues from the Special Report "Where do we go from here?"

After extensive discussions with young people and stakeholders, the OCYA released its first Special Report in April 2013 on the issues facing young people when they age out of care. The OCYA made the following five recommendations. That the Ministry of Human Services:

1. Ensures young people leaving care have affordable, safe, and stable housing options and the financial resources to support themselves independently.
   - Revise policy and practice to provide the support required by young people.
2. Dedicates and trains caseworkers to meet the unique needs of young people leaving care.
   - Identify caseworkers to serve this population, including dedicated time available for young people to access them.
   - Provide training to staff on the needs of this population and how to engage them.
3. Increases the awareness of caseworkers, caregivers, and service providers about resources for young people leaving care and support young people to access them.
   - Create greater awareness among caseworkers, caregivers, and agency staff about resources and programs that support transitioning to independence.
   - Build processes for a seamless transition from "in care" to adult services that are appropriate to their needs.

4. Ensures young people leaving care have supportive adult relationships.
   - Work with young people and caregivers so young people develop the relationships and relationship skills they require for independence.
   - Wherever possible, ensure that young people are able to effectively address their interests regarding family relationships.
5. Supports young people leaving care with access to counseling and/or mental health services and those that require it are transitioned to the adult system.
   - Provide counseling to young people who require it to address the trauma surrounding coming into care and related issues.
   - Work with Alberta Health Services to provide services that meet the mental health needs of young people.

Systemic Issues from Investigative Review reports

Three Investigative Review reports were published during 2013-2014, regarding the deaths of "Brian", "Kamil" and "Jack." While these were three unique boys with unique lives, they were impacted by some common experiences in the Child Intervention system. Common systemic issues identified in the reports concerned:

- The assessment process used in determining risk and identifying services;
- Coordination of services; and
- Developing and maintaining relationships with young people.

A complete list of the recommendations made in the three Investigative Review reports is contained in Appendix B.

The OCYA appreciates...

...the outstanding service to young people by **The Alex - Youth Health Centre**. The Alex has provided so many young people with compassionate and non-judgmental services ranging from medical care to job search and parenting support. Their staff are dedicated and passionate about helping vulnerable young people overcome challenges that negatively impact their health. One phone call to The Alex is all it takes and they are greeted with respect and understanding. Keep up the fantastic work! You are impacting many young people and making a difference every day.

Systemic Issues from Service Reports

The OCYA prepares service reports for each Child and Family Service Region and each Delegated First Nations Authority, as well as a provincial overview. These reports summarize activity that the OCYA has had with young people and stakeholders from these jurisdictions, and identify systemic issues.

Some of the issues identified through the OCYA's involvement with young people are concentrated in one or a few jurisdictions. Other issues are more widespread. Sometimes an issue is first identified within a single jurisdiction, but is later found to be more widespread.

One issue identified in the Edmonton Region concerns access to counselling services. This issue was first noted in the period covering October 2012 to March 2013, and there has been a lack of progress towards its resolution. Another issue identified in the Edmonton Region is delays in permanency planning for children in care. In a number of cases, adequate resources have not been put into searching for family, significant others or placements within the child's home community at an early stage.

Early in the fiscal year, an issue identified by young people in the Calgary Region concerned financial supports and services for individuals older than 18 years of age. Financial supports for food, housing and necessities appeared to be more readily available in the second half of the fiscal year, but young people continued to report experiencing challenges in accessing supports such as medical or therapeutic services.

Another issue first identified in the Calgary Region concerns the separation of siblings in care. This issue has since been found to be of widespread concern throughout the province and in First Nations communities.

Other province-wide systemic issues identified during this annual reporting period include:

- Inconsistency in the child intervention service delivery system. Across the province and in First Nations communities, services vary considerably depending upon the region or authority providing the service;
- Innovative practices in some areas of the province do not seem to be easily shared or supported for province-wide consideration;
- Lack of provincial-level attention and support of child intervention services; and
- The lack of requirements to consider a child's views in the new legislation that allows a former guardian to review a Permanent Guardianship Order.

TRACKING PROGRESS ON ADDRESSING THE ADVOCATE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

During 2013-2014, the Ministry of Human Services responded to the recommendations made by the OCYA in three Investigative Review reports, one Special Report and three previous Annual Reports. These responses, and the progress made in addressing recommendations made by the Advocate, can be found on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca).

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	LAST ACTUAL 2012-2013	TARGET 2013-2014	ACTUAL 2013-2014
All recommendations are followed up with the respective systems within six months and are reported by the Child and Youth Advocate.	100%	90%	100%

"Progress made in addressing recommendations made by the Advocate, can be found on the OCYA website (www.ocya.alberta.ca)"

In general, the most progress has been noted with the Ministry's first response on the Special Report on youth aging out of care "Where do we go from here?". The least amount of progress has been noted with the Ministry's response to the Investigative Review concerning *7-Year-Old-Jack*; this was the last report released by the OCYA during the 2013-2014 reporting period.

The Ministry's responses often do not address the recommendations, but rather, include a summary of activities that are already underway and do not directly link to the Advocate's recommendations. In most cases, the progress noted relates to the Ministry's commitment to take action, yet there has actually been minimal action taken on most of the Advocate's recommendations. Also, some of the Ministry's responses are similar to what was provided previously, so no further progress is noted.

These reports stress the need for the Child Intervention system to build a structured process that ensures responses to the Advocate's recommendations translate into actual practice improvements. When a child dies, it is important that everyone learns from the tragedy. The Advocate's recommendations are intended to help facilitate this learning, so that those who provide services to young people can improve their circumstances and avoid similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

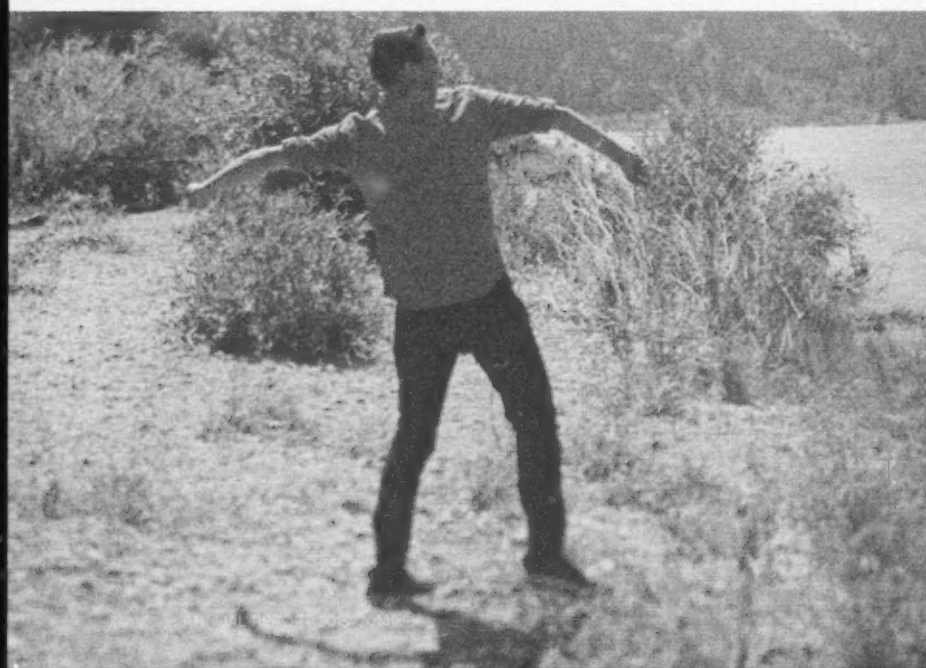
LOOKING AHEAD

The OCYA will continue to build on its outreach activities to educate young people and service providers. We will work to increase awareness and advance the rights and voices of children and youth. Among the initiatives planned for the upcoming year are the following:

- Developing and undertaking training of a select group of young people who can in turn educate other young people about their rights. Efforts will be made to reach more isolated and rural populations;
- Expanding membership on the OCYA's Youth Advisory Panel with more consideration of representation from rural communities;
- Supporting school-based education efforts, including educating school staff on children's rights;
- Adding another public education specialist to support a broader outreach plan to OCYA stakeholders;
- Holding focus groups across the province and in First Nations communities as part of the OCYA's next Special Report;
- Helping plan and support National Aboriginal Day events;
- With collaborating partners, leading a discussion on how to better meet the mental health needs of young people in Alberta. This will include a second symposium on children and mental health in October 2014;
- Celebrating National Child Day on November 20, 2014, with an exciting theme related to a young person's right to play; and
- Launching new and engaging materials to better connect and communicate with young people, a redesigned website, and a Facebook page.

As part of OCYA restructuring, lead responsibility for systemic advocacy will also be moving under the Executive Director of Child and Youth Advocacy. This move will help facilitate broader support and involvement in systemic advocacy efforts.

The OCYA appreciates...



... the **Opokaa'sin Early Intervention Society of Lethbridge** for their support and advocacy for Aboriginal children and families in southern Alberta. Opokaa'sin in Blackfoot means 'all the children' and describes the importance of young people in their community. They provide respectful, culturally relevant programming and services to assist in raising healthy children and families. Opokaa'sin uses the Circle of Courage with the core values of Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity to educate families on raising healthy children.

IN CLOSING

This past fiscal year was only our second as an independent office of the Alberta Legislature, and yet the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has already experienced growth and evolution.

As we look ahead to another eventful year, we are committed to constantly learning from our work and activities so that we can remain effective at serving children and youth who come to our attention. A few OCYA processes and operations have already been revamped based on the organization's experiences to date. Albertans can expect more of this continuous improvement in the future.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the OCYA for their hard work and ongoing commitment to the organization and to Alberta's children and youth. They are an amazing group of people who have a passion for the rights of young people, and always find their work rewarding, even in difficult and challenging circumstances.

I also wish to thank the many stakeholders that have engaged with the OCYA and welcomed us at their organizations, events and forums. The input and perspectives you offer are invaluable in helping the OCYA focus its efforts and fulfill its mandate. It is clear that your efforts and commitment to supporting Alberta's vulnerable children has made a huge difference in their lives. We look forward to continuing to work together so children and youth can receive the very best that we can provide to them.

Finally, some words for the children and youth who have come to our attention and accessed our services. Thank you for the opportunities you have given us to see through your eyes and hear your stories. It is through this interaction that the OCYA often does its best learning. We are here for you and we take that role, and the responsibilities that come with it, very seriously. Please know your diverse experiences - your triumphs and your trials - are recognized and acknowledged, and they will guide us as we work to ensure your rights are upheld, your interests are considered, and your viewpoints are known.

Del Graff
Child and Youth Advocate

APPENDIX A

2013-2014 SUMMARY OF CONCLUDED REPORTS OF SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH OF YOUNG PEOPLE

CLOSED AFTER EXAMINATION

The following reports were closed after a thorough review of the Report of Serious Injury or Death; the Child Intervention systems' electronic file information regarding the young person; and, contact with a source outside the Ministry of Human Services to ensure that information is collected from more than one source.

1. A First Nation woman was 18 years old when she was found with serious injuries on a downtown street in a city. She was the subject of a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement[11] at the time. She was not willing to disclose how she was injured and she did not have any long lasting physical impairments. This incident occurred prior to legislative amendments allowing the Advocate to undertake reviews for young people over 17 years of age.

2. A First Nation youth was 17 years old when he was injured at a party. He was stabbed and recovered from his injuries with no long lasting physical impairments. He was not willing to disclose the details of the incident. He was subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order[12] and living with a relative when the incident occurred.

3. A two-year-old First Nation boy was the subject of a Temporary Guardianship Order[13] when he ran out into traffic and was struck by a car. He was playing in the backyard with his foster parents when he suddenly darted out into traffic. He did have a few fractured ribs but did not suffer long lasting physical impairment.

4. An 18-month-old First Nation toddler suffered severe burns to her face. She was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order and was in the care of foster parents at the time of the injury. She was being bathed and rinsed off with a hand sprayer when another child in the home turned on the hot water while the foster parent was not looking. The region conducted an investigation into the foster home and the police conducted a criminal investigation. A paediatrician specializing in child abuse was consulted. The outcome of both investigations was that the cause of the injury was accidental. The little girl is expected to make a full recovery.

11 Support and Financial Assistance Agreement – An Agreement that Human Services enters into with a young person aged 18 to 22 years to provide support and financial assistance to the young person.

12 Permanent Guardianship Order – Under a Permanent Guardianship Order, the court awards custody and guardianship of the child to the Director on a permanent basis.

13 Temporary Guardianship Order – Under a Temporary Guardianship Order, the court awards custody and guardianship of the child to the Director for a specified period of time.

5. A baby girl of Caucasian descent, under the age of one year, passed away while awaiting a heart transplant. She was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order and was being cared for by foster parents. She suffered a cardiac arrest and was transported to hospital where she passed away the same day. She was a medically fragile child and her death was related to her medical condition.

6. A seven-year-old First Nation boy from another province was placed in Alberta due to his high medical needs and access to medical services. His medical condition deteriorated and he was considered palliative. He was in care under an agreement with his parents and he passed away in his long-term foster home. He did not have status under the *Enhancement Act*.

7. A First Nation girl who was one year old passed away from medical complications. She had been in hospital since birth; she was born with her organs outside her body. She was the subject of a Family Enhancement Agreement with Guardian[14] which was in place to support her family. Her cause of death was "massive organ failure."

8. A baby boy of African descent was one month old when he passed away due to medical complications related to his premature birth (26 weeks gestation). There was minimal child intervention involvement; his premature birth resulted in a Screening[15] to ensure his mother had adequate supports to care for him and his sibling.

9. A First Nation girl, almost two years old, passed away after suffering a brain aneurysm.[16] At the time, she was the subject of a Safety Assessment.[17] Her mother found the little girl in an unresponsive state. The girl was taken to the community health centre and then transported to the nearest children's hospital. She had surgery but it was not successful and she passed away.

10. A newborn baby girl of First Nations ancestry was born 16 weeks premature and passed away when she was just over one week old. It was reported that her mother used cocaine during her pregnancy. An ultrasound revealed significant brain damage and the baby was not expected to survive. She remained in the neonatal intensive care unit during her short life. After consultation with several medical professionals, she was removed from life support. Her older siblings were living with extended family members, one of whom was subject of an Application for Permanent Guardianship Order.

11. A Caucasian boy passed away when he was seven years old. At the time, he was the subject of a Supervision Order.[18] His parents had a history of alcohol abuse and domestic violence. The boy had severe allergies and was being treated for asthma. He had an asthma attack at home. He did not respond to his medication

14 Family Enhancement Agreement with Guardian – Child Intervention Services are provided with the guardians' consent.

15 Screening – A screening report is completed when a concern is reported to Child Intervention Services regarding possible risk to a child and the concerns fall under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

16 "A brain aneurysm (AN-yoo-riz-um) is a bulge or ballooning in a blood vessel in the brain. It often looks like a berry hanging on a stem. A brain aneurysm can leak or rupture, causing bleeding into the brain (hemorrhagic stroke). Most often a ruptured brain aneurysm occurs in the space between the brain and the thin tissues covering the brain. This type of hemorrhagic stroke is called a subarachnoid hemorrhage. A ruptured aneurysm quickly becomes life-threatening and requires prompt medical treatment (taken from: http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/brain-aneurysm/basics/definition/con-20028457).

17 Safety Assessment is completed as part of an Initial Assessment to determine if a child is in need of protective services.

18 Supervision Order – A court order with conditions that parents must follow for their children to remain in their care, to ensure the safety of the children

and went into cardiac arrest. Emergency Medical Services transported him to hospital where he was pronounced deceased shortly after arrival.

12. A First Nation boy passed away when he was six years old. He was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order. He had significant global development delays[19] and had been in hospital for the few years preceding his death due to his medical needs. On a number of occasions, "life-saving measures" were undertaken. He developed pneumonia and lapsed into a coma from which he did not recover.

13. A 10-year-old First Nation boy passed away due to significant medical concerns that included mitochondrial DNA depletion syndrome.[20] He also suffered from chronic kidney disease and was developmentally delayed. He was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order. The boy was admitted to a children's hospital and passed away two weeks later. His cause of death was determined to be Congestive Heart Failure.[21]

14. A one-year-old Métis girl passed away from stage 4 cancer. At the time, she was the subject of a Supervision Order. She was in palliative care in the hospital until she died. Child Intervention Services was involved with the family due to neglect concerns, domestic violence and criminal involvement.

CLOSED AFTER ASSESSMENT

The following reports were closed after reviewing the Examination information and a thorough review of all relevant Human Services' paper files and contacts with collateral sources.

There were four Reports of Death received in 2012-2013 that were closed after Assessment in this reporting period (2013-2014):

1. A two-year-old girl of African descent passed away in hospital after being removed from life support. Her parents were subsequently charged with manslaughter. There was no child intervention involvement with the family prior to the incident that caused her hospitalization. Her siblings were apprehended and placed in foster care.

2. A Caucasian infant who was approximately three months old was found in his crib not breathing. His foster mother had laid him down for a nap about three hours earlier. He was the subject of a Temporary Guardianship Order and had been in the foster home for two months when he died. His cause of death was

19 Global development delay is a term used to describe a generalized intellectual disability that is usually characterized by lower than average intellectual functioning along with significant limitations in at least two other areas of development. Common signs of global development delay include delayed acquisition of milestones (e.g., sitting up, crawling, walking), limited reasoning or conceptual abilities, poor social skills and judgment, aggressive behavior as a coping skill, and communication difficulties (taken from http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/inmdict/html/global_development_delay).

20 Mitochondrial DNA depletion syndrome (MDS) refers to a group of autosomal recessive disorders which cause the affected tissues to suffer from a significant drop in mitochondrial DNA. These syndromes affect tissue found in the muscle, liver, or both the muscle and brain, respectively. The condition is typically fatal in infancy and early childhood (taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitochondrial_DNA_depletion_syndrome).

21 Heart failure, sometimes known as congestive heart failure (CHF), occurs when your heart muscle doesn't pump blood as well as it should (taken from: http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-failure/basics/definition/con-20029801).

found to be "undetermined." The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) indicated that he was found lying on his back; the crib was free of toys and presented as a safe sleep environment.

3. A First Nation infant who was approximately five months old was found unresponsive, lying on his stomach on a living room sofa. He was in the care of his parents when he died. Child Intervention Services was involved with the family under an open Safety Assessment. The OCME found the cause of death to be "undetermined" and indicated that the sleeping environment was particularly unsafe. The RCMP conducted an investigation and determined that the baby's death was non-criminal.

4. A Caucasian youth who died at 14 years of age. The OCME found the cause of death to be suicide. Child Intervention Services had been involved with the family through a Safety Assessment that was supposed to have been closed approximately two months prior to the young person's death; however, the paperwork was not completed.

There were two Reports of Death received in 2013-2014 that were closed after Assessment in this reporting period (2013-2014):

1. An 18-year-old First Nation man was found deceased in his apartment. Police are investigating the circumstances, as there is reason to believe he was murdered. The young man was the subject of a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement. This incident occurred prior to legislative amendments allowing the Advocate to undertake reviews for young people over 17 years of age.

2. A First Nation man was 18 years old when he was found deceased in his apartment. The OCME determined his cause of death to be "unexplained" and may have been linked to schizophrenia. This young man had a number of psychiatric diagnoses and was on a number of medications. At the time of his death, he was the subject of a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement. He was living in a supported group home placement for people with developmental disabilities. Prior to his eighteenth birthday, he was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order and had been in 36 placements over seven years. He was in regular contact with his birth family. This young man's death occurred prior to legislative amendments allowing the Advocate to undertake reviews for young people over 17 years of age.

There were two Reports of Serious Injury and four Reports of Death that were received in 2013-2014 but were closed after Assessment between April 1 and September 30, 2014:

1. The Child and Youth Advocate received a Report of Serious Injury regarding a six-month-old First Nation infant who was admitted to hospital with a skull fracture and a fractured tibia. There was minimal Child Intervention Services' involvement prior to these injuries. The baby's father confessed to aggravated assault and was charged. The baby was subsequently apprehended and placed in foster care.

2. A 14-month-old Caucasian boy was admitted to hospital for a serious infection and subsequently passed away. There was no Child Intervention Services' involvement prior to his admission to hospital. A referral was made to Child

Intervention Services which resulted in a Screening and Safety Assessment. The boy passed away one day after being admitted to hospital, less than 12 hours after the referral was made to Child Intervention Services. Medical professionals, police and Child Intervention Services responded in a coordinated manner.

3. A 16-month-old Caucasian girl was taken to hospital after suffering a seizure. There was no Child Intervention Services' involvement prior to her admission to hospital. Her mother's explanation regarding the cause of the injury was inconsistent with the injury. A referral was made to Child Intervention Services which resulted in a Screening and a Safety Assessment. The little girl passed away from a head injury. Police were pursuing a criminal investigation.

4. A First Nation baby, approximately six months old, was found not breathing and unresponsive while sleeping between his parents on a sectional sofa. There was minimal Child Intervention Services' involvement with the family. The baby was the subject of a Safety Assessment when he passed away. Child Intervention Services, the police and medical professionals responded in a coordinated fashion.

5. A 14-year-old Caucasian youth was seriously injured in an altercation with peers. He was stabbed and subsequently required hospitalization. He was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order at the time of the injury. He has recovered fully.

6. A one-year-old First Nation baby died due to medical complications related to viral hepatitis. She was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order living in a kinship care placement when she passed away.

APPENDIX B

2013-2014 RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN INVESTIGATIVE REVIEW REPORTS

REMEMBERING BRIAN

Recommendation One: Child Intervention Services should engage in comprehensive assessments to ensure a balance is struck between child-focused and family-centered approaches. It is vital that intervention services not only address the presenting issues in a family, but also fully examine and address the impacts those issues have had on children in the family.

Recommendation Two: Guidelines should be developed that will aid caseworkers in assessing the impacts of family violence and parental addictions on children, and which provide direction for supporting children who have been exposed to these circumstances.

Recommendation Three: In developing support plans for children and their families, intervention workers should ensure that comprehensive plans are in place to support and maintain a child's cultural connections, recognizing that family, community and tradition are all important contributions to culture.

Recommendation Four: Kinship caregivers should be provided with specialized training and support plans, which are both tailored to meet their individual and unique needs. The goal should be to ensure kinship caregivers have the resources they require to manage the unique challenges that come with their caregiving, such as dual loyalties, unrealistic expectations, changes in family dynamics and feelings of loss, guilt and shame.

Recommendation Five: Intervention workers should be provided specialized training so they have the competencies required to manage unique situations presented by kinship care arrangements. The goal should be to ensure caseworkers can effectively support kinship caregivers in providing protection, well-being, and a bridge to permanency for children in their care.

Recommendation Six: Alberta Human Services should review and amend policies and guidelines to bring about consistent practices among regions and ensure seamless, coordinated inter-regional delivery of intervention services.

KAMIL: AN IMMIGRANT YOUTH'S STRUGGLE

Recommendation One: Assessments should be undertaken with and informed by a comprehensive understanding of a young person's cultural context, including their life history, background and relationships (both pre and post migration), to improve the effectiveness of intervention services.

Recommendation Two: The Child Intervention system should assess each young person holistically, including identification and assessment of their protective factors, and work proactively with supportive adults to maintain and strengthen these factors to improve the young person's resiliency and well-being.

Recommendation Three: The policy regarding approval of psychotropic medications should be amended to recognize and reflect the urgency of situations in which young people require these medications. In addition, there should be a requirement to communicate back to the mental health professional(s) when a recommended medication or therapy is not approved.

Recommendation Four: Caseworkers should personally communicate with young people and their mental health providers to obtain thorough and accurate information to ensure that their client's needs and interests are met.

Recommendation Five: Human Services should increase opportunities for Child Intervention staff to work in a more innovative, inclusive and collaborative environment to improve the quality of decision making for vulnerable children and youth.

7-YEAR-OLD JACK

Recommendation One: The Ministry of Human Services should ensure the preservation or resolution of relationships are at the foundation of permanency planning for children.

- Children need to be involved—at a level appropriate to their understanding —in envisioning how their significant relationships will look in their future.
- Attention should be given to grief and loss interventions where relationships are lost or ambiguous.
- Transitions between parental care and placements within the system need to be deliberate and focused on a child's need for consistent relationships.

Recommendation Two: The Ministry of Human Services in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General should undertake a review of court delays for children in temporary care:

- identify the number of children for whom court delays have impacted permanency;
- identify the barriers that are causing court delays;
- establish a plan to resolve this issue; and,
- report on progress.

Recommendation Three: The Ministry of Human Services needs to reinforce compliance to existing policy regarding regular case-conferencing with all stakeholders and service providers, ensuring that children are involved whenever possible.

Recommendation Four: The results of service delivery placement investigations should be better coordinated to ensure that:

- Recommendations resulting from these investigations are documented and accounted for in the electronic database to ensure their resolution;
- Results of placement investigations are centrally analyzed in order to identify key learnings that could enhance the strength of the overall system; and,
- The learnings identified from service delivery investigations are actively disseminated province-wide, with the goal of enhancing the safety and well-being of children in care.

Recommendation Five: The Ministry of Human Services should:

- Review, clarify and communicate policy regarding the decision-making authority of the Director when a child in temporary care passes away. Including clear policy direction for decisions related to tissue donation; and
- Review case practice in relation to what parents are told when their child is in temporary care; specifically, the decision-making that might occur in the parents' absence. Policy should be implemented to ensure consistent application across the province.

2013-2014 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL REPORTING

The financial statements of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (the "OCYA"), including the performance measures, are the responsibility of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Responsibility for the integrity and objectivity of the financial statements and performance results for the OCYA rests with the Child and Youth Advocate. I oversee the preparation of the OCYA's annual report, including financial statements and performance results. The financial statements and the performance results, of necessity, include amounts that are based on estimates and judgments. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. The performance measures are prepared in accordance with the following criteria:

- Reliability – information agrees with underlying data and the sources used to prepare it.
- Understandability and Comparability – current results are presented clearly in accordance with the stated methodology and are comparable with previous results.
- Completeness – performance measures and related targets match those included in the OCYA's 2013-2016 Business Plan.

As Child and Youth Advocate, in addition to program responsibilities, I am responsible for the OCYA's financial administration and reporting functions. The OCYA maintains systems of financial management and internal control which give consideration to costs, benefits, and risks that are designed to:

- provide reasonable assurance that transactions are properly authorized, executed in accordance with prescribed legislation and regulations, and properly recorded so as to maintain accountability of public money;
- provide information to manage and report on performance;
- safeguard the assets and properties of the province under the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's administration; and
- facilitate preparation of the OCYA's business plan and annual report.

In fulfilling my responsibilities for the OCYA, I have relied, as necessary, on the management of the OCYA.

[Original signed by Del Graff]

Del Graff
Child and Youth Advocate
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
July 4, 2014

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

Financial Statements

March 31, 2014

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Year ended March 31, 2014

Independent Auditor's Report

Statement of Operations

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Cash Flows

Notes to the Financial Statements

Schedule 1 – Expenses – Directly Incurred Detailed by Object

Schedule 2 – Lapse/Encumbrance

Schedule 3 – Salary and Benefits Disclosures

Schedule 4 – Related Party Transactions

Schedule 5 – Allocated Costs

AUDITOR GENERAL
Alberta

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly

Report on the Financial Statements

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2014, and the statements of operations and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate as at March 31, 2014, and the results of its operations, its remeasurement gains and losses, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

[Original signed by Merwan N. Saher, FCA]

Auditor General

July 4, 2014

Edmonton, Alberta

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
Year Ended March 31, 2014

	2014 Budget	2014 Actual	2013 Restated Actual
Revenues			
Other Revenue	$ -	$ 436	$ -
Total Revenues	$ -	$ 436	$ -
Expenses - Directly Incurred (Note 2b and Schedule 5)			
Program (Schedule 1, 2)			
Child and Youth Advocate's Office	$ 760,000	$ 668,824	$ 665,042
Child and Youth Advocacy	3,408,000	2,959,320	2,560,543
Legal Representation for Children and Youth	4,099,000	4,564,109	4,418,200
Quality Assurance and Investigations	991,000	785,890	394,720
Systemic Advocacy and Stakeholder Relations	1,325,000	1,266,318	922,336
Strategic Support	1,781,000	1,795,278	1,274,621
Total Expenses	$ 12,364,000	$ 12,039,739	$ 10,235,462
Net Operating Results	$ (12,364,000)	$ (12,039,303)	$ (10,235,462)

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at March 31, 2014

	2014	2013
Assets		
Prepaid Expenses	$ 1,775	$ 6,091
Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	784,552	974,614
	$ 786,327	$ 980,705
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	2,681,777	1,968,504
Accrued Vacation Pay	656,258	584,434
	$ 3,338,035	$ 2,552,938
Net Liabilities		
Net Liabilities at Beginning of Year	$ (1,572,233)	$ -
Net Operating Results	(12,039,303)	(10,235,462)
Net Financing Provided from General Revenues	11,059,828	8,663,229
Net Liabilities at End of Year	$ (2,551,708)	$ (1,572,233)
	$ 786,327	$ 980,705

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
Year Ended March 31, 2014

	2014	2013
Operating Transactions		
Net Operating Results	$ (12,039,303)	$ (10,235,462)
Non-Cash Items included in Net Operating Results:		
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets	214,242	101,376
Valuation Adjustments	71,824	148,754
	(11,753,237)	(9,985,332)
Increase in Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	713,273	919,798
Decrease/(Increase) in Prepaid Expenses	4,316	(6,091)
Cash Applied to Operating Transactions	(11,035,648)	(9,071,625)
Capital Transactions		
Acquisition of Tangible Capital Assets	(24,180)	(141,783)
Transfer of Capital Asset from Human Services	-	(418,253)
Cash Applied to Capital Transactions	(24,180)	(560,036)
Financing Transactions		
Net Transfer from Ministry of Human Services (Note 3)	-	968,432
Net Financing Provided from General Revenues	11,059,828	8,663,229
	11,059,828	9,631,661
Increase in Cash	-	-
Cash at Beginning of Year	-	-
Cash at End of Year	$ -	$ -

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2014

NOTE 1 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (the Office) operates under the authority of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* which was proclaimed on April 1, 2012. The net cost of the operations of the Office is borne by the General Revenue Fund of the Province of Alberta. Annual operating budgets are approved by the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices.

The Office represents the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth who receive designated services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act,* and youth involved with the youth criminal justice system.

NOTE 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND REPORTING PRACTICES

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards.

(a) Reporting Entity

The reporting entity is the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, which is a Legislative Office and for which the Child and Youth Advocate is accountable.

The Office operates within the General Revenue Fund (the Fund). The Fund is administered by the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance. All cash receipts of the Office are deposited into the Fund and all cash disbursements made by the Office are paid from the Fund. Net financing provided from General Revenues is the difference between all cash receipts and all cash disbursements made.

(b) Basis of Financial Reporting

Revenue Accounting Policy
All revenues are reported on the accrual basis of accounting. Cash received for which goods or services have not been provided by year end is recorded as deferred revenue.

Expenses
Directly Incurred
Directly incurred expenses are those costs the Office has primary responsibility and accountability for, as reflected in the Offices of the Legislative Assembly budget documents.

NOTE 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND REPORTING PRACTICES (continued)

(b) Basis of Financial Reporting (continued)

Expenses – Directly Incurred (continued)
In addition to program operating expenses such as salaries, supplies, etc., directly incurred expenses also include:

- amortization of tangible capital assets,
- pension costs, which are the cost of employer contributions for current service of employees during the year, and
- valuation adjustments represent the change in management's estimate of future payments arising from obligations relating to vacation pay.

Incurred by Others
Services contributed by other entities in support of the Office's operations are not recognized and are disclosed in Schedule 4 and allocated to programs in Schedule 5.

Assets
Financial assets are assets that could be used to discharge existing liabilities or finance future operations and are not for consumption in the normal course of operations. Financial assets of the Office are limited to financial claims, such as advances to and receivables from other organizations, employees and other individuals.

Assets acquired by right are not included.

Tangible capital assets of the Office are recorded at historical cost and amortized on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the assets. The threshold for capitalizing new systems development is $250,000 and the threshold for major systems enhancements is $100,000. The threshold for all other tangible capital assets is $5,000.

Amortization is only charged if the tangible capital asset is in use.

Liabilities
Liabilities are recorded to the extent that they represent present obligations as a result of events and transactions occurring prior to the end of the fiscal year. The settlement of liabilities will result in sacrifice of economic benefits in the future.

NOTE 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND REPORTING PRACTICES (continued)

(b) Basis of Financial Reporting (continued)

Valuation of Financial Assets and Liabilities

Fair value is the amount of consideration agreed upon in an arm's-length transaction between knowledgeable, willing parties who are under no compulsion to act.

The fair values of Accounts Receivable, and Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities are estimated to approximate their carrying values because of the short term nature of these instruments.

Net Liabilities

Net Liabilities represents the difference between the carrying value of assets held by the Office and its liabilities.

Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards require a "net debt" presentation for the statement of financial position in the summary financial statements of governments. Net debt presentation reports the difference between financial assets and liabilities as "net debt" or "net financial assets" as an indicator of the future revenues required to pay for past transactions and events. The Office operates within the government reporting entity, and does not finance all its expenditures by independently raising revenues. Accordingly, these financial statements do not report a net debt indicator.

(c) Financial Instruments

As the Office does not have any transactions involving financial instruments that are classified in the fair value category and has no foreign currency transactions, there are no remeasurement gains and losses and a statement of remeasurement gains and losses has not been presented.

NOTE 3 TRANSFER OF NET LIABILITIES

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate was formed on April 1, 2012 with the proclamation of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. Effective April 1, 2012, the Ministry of Human Services transferred net liabilities to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate as follows:

Capital Assets, net	$515,954
Accrued Liabilities	(1,048,706)
Accrued Vacation Pay	(435,680)
Net Liabilities	**($968,432)**

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2014

NOTE 4 TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

	Office Equipment	Computer Hardware	Computer Software	2013-14 Total
Estimated Useful Life	3 years	3 years	3 and 5 years	
Historical Costs				
Beginning of Year	$ 32,109	$ 123,408	$1,440,982	$ 1,596,498
Additions	24,180	-	-	24,180
	$ 56,289	$ 123,408	$1,440,982	$ 1,620,678
Accumulated Amortization				
Beginning of Year	$ 16,095	$ 2,483	$ 603,307	$ 621,885
Amortization Expense	5,351	23,051	185,840	214,242
	$ 21,446	$ 25,534	$ 789,147	$ 836,127
Net Book value at March 31, 2014	$ 34,843	$ 97,874	$ 651,835	$ 784,551
Net Book value at March 31, 2013	$ 16,014	$ 120,925	$ 837,675	$ 974,614

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2014

NOTE 5 CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Contractual obligations are obligations of the Office to others that will become liabilities in the future when the terms of the contracts or agreements are met.

As at March 31, 2014, the Office has the following contractual obligations:

	2014	2013
Obligations under Operating Leases	$ 7,331	$ 10,486
Obligations under Contracts	198,943	179,812
	$206,274	$190,298

Estimated payment requirements for the unexpired terms of these contractual obligations are as follows:

	Total
2014-15	$205,227
2015-16	1,047
	$206,274

NOTE 6 BENEFIT PLANS

The Office participates in the multi-employer pension plans: Management Employees Pension Plan, Public Service Pension Plan and Supplementary Retirement Plan for Public Service Managers. The expense for these pension plans is equivalent to the annual contributions of $848,795 for the year ended March 31, 2014 (2013 - $710,560). The Office is not responsible for future funding of the plan deficit other than through contribution increases.

At December 31, 2013, the Management Employees Pension Plan reported a surplus of $50,457,000 (2012 – Deficiency $303,423,000), the Public Service Pension Plan reported a deficiency of $1,254,678,000 (2012 - deficiency $1,645,141,000), and the Supplementary Retirement Plan for Public Service Managers reported a deficiency of $12,384,000 (2012 – deficiency $51,870,000).

The Office also participates in a multi-employer Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan. At March 31, 2014, the Management, Opted Out and Excluded Plan reported an actuarial surplus of $24,055,000 (2013 – surplus $18,327,000). The expense for this plan is limited to the employer's annual contributions for the year.

NOTE 7 COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Certain 2013 figures have been reclassified to conform to the 2014 presentation.

NOTE 8 APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements were approved by the Senior Financial Officer and the Child and Youth Advocate.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE **Schedule 1**
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
EXPENSES - DIRECTLY INCURRED DETAILED BY OBJECT
Year ended March 31, 2014

	2014		2013
	Budget	Actual	Actual
Voted:			
Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits	$ 6,709,000	$ 6,238,300	$ 5,573,134
Supplies and Services	5,440,000	5,587,197	4,560,952
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets	215,000	214,242	101,376
Total Expenses	$ 12,364,000	$ 12,039,739	$ 10,235,462

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
LAPSE/ENCUMBRANCE
Year ended March 31, 2014

Schedule 2

	2014					
	Voted Estimate [1]	Adjustments	Supplementary Estimate	Adjusted Voted Estimate	Actual [2]	Unexpended (Over Expended)
Program - Operational						
Child and Youth Advocate's Office	$ 760,000	$ -	$ -	$ 760,000	$ 650,718	$ 109,282
Child and Youth Advocacy	3,408,000	-	-	3,408,000	2,957,861	450,139
Legal Representation for Children and Youth	4,099,000	-	-	4,099,000	4,564,546	(465,546)
Quality Assurance and Investigations	991,000	-	-	991,000	780,212	210,788
Systemic Advocacy and Stakeholder Relations	1,325,000	-	-	1,325,000	1,260,894	64,106
Strategic Support	1,566,000	-	-	1,566,000	1,539,442	26,558
Total	$ 12,149,000	$ -	$ -	$ 12,149,000	$ 11,753,673	$ 395,327
Lapse						$ 395,327
Program - Capital						
Strategic Support	$ 75,000	$ -	$ -	$ 75,000	$ 24,180	$ 50,820
Total	$ 75,000	$ -	$ -	$ 75,000	$ 24,180	$ 50,820
Lapse						$ 50,820

(1) As per Voted Expenses and Capital Investment by Program of 2013-14 Offices of the Legislative Assembly Estimates.
(2) Actuals exclude non-voted amounts such as amortization and valuation adjustments.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
SALARY AND BENEFITS DISCLOSURE
Year Ended March 31, 2014

Schedule 3

	2014				2013
	Base Salary [1]	Other Cash Benefits [2]	Other Non-Cash Benefits [3]	Total	Total
Senior Official					
Child and Youth Advocate [4]	$ 227,520	$ 1,850	$ 68,454	$ 297,824	$ 277,866
Executive Director					
Executive Director, Child and Youth Advocacy	137,535	1,850	39,008	178,393	168,337
Total	$ 365,055	$ 3,700	$ 107,462	$ 476,217	$ 446,203

(1) Base salary includes regular salary and earnings.
(2) Other cash benefits include lump sum payments. There were no bonuses paid in 2014.
(3) Other non-cash benefits include the Office's share of all employee benefits and contributions or payments made on behalf of employees including pension, supplementary retirement plans, health care, dental coverage, group life insurance, short and long term disability plans, professional memberships and tuition fees.
(4) Automobile provided, no dollar amount included in other non-cash benefits.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE **Schedule 4**
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS
Year ended March 31, 2014

Related parties are those entities consolidated or accounted for on the modified equity basis in the Government of Alberta's financial statements. Related parties also include key management personnel in the Office.

The Office and its employees paid or collected certain taxes and fees set by regulation for premiums, licences and other charges. These amounts were incurred in the normal course of business, reflect charges applicable to all users, and have been excluded from this schedule.

The Office had the following transactions with related parties recorded on the Statement of Operations and the Statement of Financial Position at the amount of consideration agreed upon between the related parties:

	Other Entities	
	2014	2013 Restated
Expenses - Directly Incurred		
Other Services	$ 38,745	$ 29,448
Total	$ 38,745	$ 29,448

The Office also had the following transactions with related parties for which no consideration was exchanged. The amounts for these related party transactions are estimated based on the costs incurred by the service provider to provide the service. These amounts are not recorded in the financial statements but are disclosed in Schedule 5.

	Other Entities	
	2014	2013
Expenses - Incurred by Others		
Accommodation	$ 339,019	$ 335,437
Information Technology	203,423	143,313
Total	$ 542,442	$ 478,750

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
ALLOCATED COSTS
Year Ended March 31, 2014

Schedule 5

	2014				2013 Restated
		Expenses - Incurred by Others			
Program	Expenses [a]	Accomodation Costs [b]	Information Technology [c]	Total Expenses	Total Expenses
Child and Youth Advocate's Office	$ 668,824	$ 17,843	$ -	$ 686,667	$ 683,677
Child and Youth Advocacy	2,959,320	142,745	37,163	3,139,228	2,739,633
Legal Representation for Children and Youth	4,564,109	17,843	166,144	4,748,096	4,543,473
Quality Assurance and Investigations	785,890	29,738	-	815,628	425,779
Systemic Advocacy and Stakeholder Relations	1,266,318	47,582	116	1,314,016	972,486
Strategic Support	1,795,278	83,268	-	1,878,546	1,349,163
Operations	$ 12,039,739	$ 339,019	$ 203,423	$ 12,582,181	$ 10,714,211

(a) Expenses - Directly incurred as per Statement of Operations.
(b) Costs shown for Accomodation include grants in lieu of taxes.
(c) Application Management Support (AMS) Costs incurred by Ministry of Human Services to maintain OCYA Applications.

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